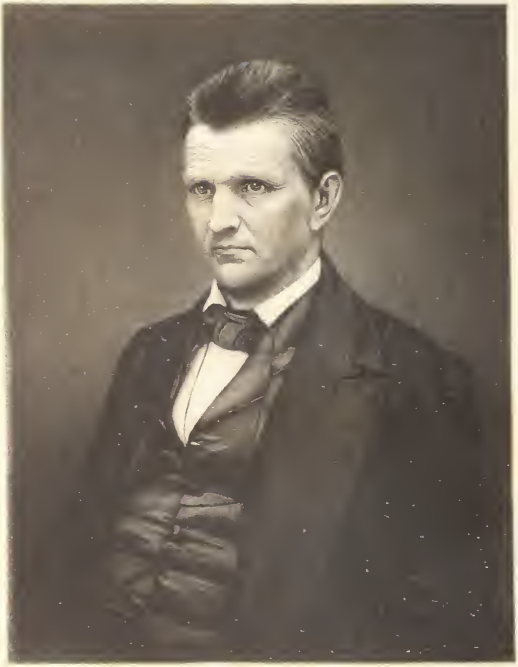

J. D. Williamson

THE

CROWN OF LIFE:

A

SERIES OF DISCOURSES.

BY I. D. WILLIAMSON.

ISAAC DOWD

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

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DEDICATION.

TO THE BELIEVERS IN

GOD'S IMPARTIAL AND EFFICIENT GRACE,

AS A TESTIMONY OF GRATITUDE AND LOVE,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY THEIR HUMBLE, YET DEVOTED SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR

GIFT
BERTRAM SMITH
Sept. 19, 1933

PREFACE.

In all his labors in the Christian ministry, during a period of more than twenty years, the author of the following discourses has known no dearer object than the inculcation of a cheerful and trustful confidence in God; in the abundance of his love, and the unchanging benevolence of all the principles of his government. He believes such a state of mind to be most favorable to the practice of all the virtues, that should adorn the Christian. When the soul rests in a calm and happy reliance upon God, and no fears disturb or cares distress, the heart is tender, and the hands ready to engage in works of love and kindness. But when the mind is harassed with doubts and fears, the temper sours, the heart hardens, the man is dissatisfied with his God, as well as with himself and his fellow-men, and is ready to smite and destroy. Hence the importance of cherishing in our hearts the spirit of a hopeful and cheerful religion — a religion which shall enable us to look up to God as a Father, whom we have all reason to love and adore; and around upon our fellows, as brethren to whom our affections and our kind offices are due. With an eye

fixed upon the principle here indicated, the following work has been prepared. The aim of the author has been to present a hopeful view of the Divine government, which can see signs of promise in every cloud, and stars of hope in every night, and thus, to win the soul to happiness and virtue. That it may, in some small measure, at least, tend to the promotion of the contemplated end, is the devout prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

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THE CROWN OF LIFE.

SERMON I.

THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. MATT. 5: 3.

THE present discourse is intended as the commencement of a brief series, founded upon that portion of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount usually denominated the Beatitudes. It is not presumed that the subjects therein presented are of that attractive character which is calculated to catch the popular ear, or please the fancy of those who seek for novelty and excitement, rather than Christian love, truth and duty. Yet, it is believed that they are sufficiently important to claim the attention of the serious and the thoughtful; and a hope is indulged, that they may be treated in such a manner as shall tend to the edification and comfort of some of this con-

gregation, and to their permanent advancement in the Divine life.

It seems proper, in the outset, to offer some general remarks upon that most excellent portion of the sacred word from which the text is selected.

It appears that the Saviour had gone through Galilee, as his manner was, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people. His fame went out through all Syria: and they brought unto him those that were sick and tormented, and those that were lunatic and afflicted with the palsy; and he healed them. So wide was his fame, and so extraordinary his works, that great multitudes followed him. They came from Galilee and Decapolis, from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond Jordan; and pressed in one vast throng around him, eager to hear the strange doctrines he taught, and to witness, or experience in their own persons, the wonderful and benevolent works he performed. And here, it would naturally be supposed, that he would have found a

proper and fitting occasion to preach to the people, and to advocate his claim to the Messiahship, and spread far and wide the doctrines of which he was the God-appointed Messenger. But from this multitude he turned away, and went into a mountain; and his disciples followed him; and there, with the canopy of heaven for his temple, the earth for his pulpit, and twelve unlettered fishermen for an audience, he delivered that sermon of sermons, which, as a specimen and a model of didactic and doctrinal teaching, stands unrivalled and unparalleled, in all the history of the world. No age or genius, prophet or priest, preceding him, had produced anything worthy to be compared with it; nor has any subsequent day, philosopher or sage, brought forth its rival or competitor. Singular it may appear, nevertheless it is true, that THE SERMON of the world, and probably the only one that will live through all subsequent ages, and command the admiration of the wise and good to the end of time, was delivered by the Son of Mary upon the lone mountain top, and to a congregation of twelve humble individuals. Let the preacher

who covets the ear of the multitude, and who cannot condescend to preach, unless cheered with the applause of a crowd, remember this, and learn humility; and let the fainting spirit of him whose flock is small, take courage from the fact, that the Divine Master could preach, and *did* preach, to a dozen souls, a sermon that never has been and never will be equalled — a sermon which has stood for ages, and done more to elevate, enlighten, cheer and encourage the hearts of the children of men, than any other production that the world ever saw.

What adds to the interest of this effort is the truth, that it is the *only* sermon of our blessed Saviour, which has come down to us in anything like its entireness. He often taught in the synagogues, and spake to his disciples and the people; and the historians have given us, occasionally, a brief synopsis of his discourse, and detached sentences of his words of wisdom. *Here*, and HERE only, we have a sermon of his, reported, probably in tolerable fulness, though perhaps not entirely so.

To the opening part of this sermon, your

attention will be invited, in this, and some subsequent discourses. It commences with the words of my text: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" and the succeeding sentences begin with a blessing, and end with the reason on which the benediction is founded.

In each instance, it will appear that these Beatitudes are not arbitrarily pronounced; but, on the contrary, there is a fitness and propriety all along: so that, when any class of men is declared blessed, the best possible reason follows, and they stand related as cause and effect.

The term "blessed," as it occurs in these Beatitudes, is translated from an original word, which means "happy;" and the passages might, with as much, and perhaps more, fidelity to the original, be rendered, "Happy are the poor in spirit," "Happy are the meek," and so on; through the whole.

By substituting this word, you will more readily perceive the deep and true philosophy that pervades this part of the discourse. "Happy are the poor in spirit." Why? Because

"theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This it is, that ministers to their happiness; and this kingdom is possessed *only* by those that are poor in spirit.

In pursuing the object contemplated in this discourse, it will be proper to consider —

I. The Kingdom of Heaven.

This, and the phrase "kingdom of God," are of frequent occurrence in the Scriptures, and may be considered as synonymous expressions. They appear to be used with considerable latitude of meaning; and on this account, it is not easy to fix on a precise definition, in any given instance, unless it is indicated by the context.

Literally speaking, a kingdom is a government; and in this sense the Scriptures frequently employ the term; as, for example, the Psalmist says, "The kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations." In this broad and primary sense, it is certain that all men are, at all times, subjects of God's kingdom. He is the Lord, and he rules and reigns supreme in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. In this capacity, "he declares the

end from the beginning, and from ancient time the thing that is not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." But it should be remembered, that man is confined to a little province of God's domain; and hence, he neither sees nor comprehends the vast plan of the Divine government. There are around us, in the regions of space, multitudes of worlds, many of them far superior to this earth in size, and, probably, inhabited by intelligent beings. These all belong to the government of God, and are always under his Divine control. This is his kingdom, in its broadest sense, extending through all worlds, and embracing all beings, from the highest seraph to the lowest man on earth. And it is manifest that, of this wide and all-embracing kingdom, man knows little or nothing. What God's purposes are, in regard to it, and what are the principles on which this government is administered, human wisdom cannot know. Neither the "poor in spirit," nor any other of the inhabitants of this "dim orb," can grasp that kingdom, or be in possession of its secrets and mysteries.

To man, on earth, however, God has been pleased to reveal a dispensation of his government, so far as it relates to his children who dwell in this world. This was, at first, given to one nation only, as his chosen and peculiar people. It was given, as a powerful sovereign would give, to some small province, a dispensation of his government, so far as they were concerned; explaining its principles, and laying down its laws for the regulation of their conduct, but leaving them in darkness, as to the laws by which other parts of the dominion are regulated. Thus, God gave by Moses a dispensation of his laws, for the government of the Jewish nation. His purposes with that people were unfolded, and his laws for their guidance were written by their lawgiver, and illustrated by the prophets; and this was, with them, the "kingdom of God;" and it was so, by virtue of the fact, that unto them it had been made known. Hence, the apostle says, among other things, "To them pertained the kingdom;" and hence, again, it was said, "the kingdom should be taken from them, and given to a nation that they knew not."

In process of time, there came to man a dispensation of the Divine government, embracing the world, in Jesus Christ; and this was more extensive and glorious than the former. It included not only the Jews, but all nations. It unfolded laws of universal application — it proclaimed the principles of God's government, and his purposes of grace, in regard to the destiny of humanity; and this, in the New Testament, is often called "the kingdom of God," and "the kingdom of heaven." Hence, when this new dispensation was about to be given, John taught, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was the kingdom of God which Jesus preached to the Jews, and which Paul was commissioned to proclaim to the Gentile world.

With this view, the phrase "kingdom of heaven" has properly been defined to mean, "The dispensation of infinite mercy, and the manifestation of eternal truth, by Jesus Christ our Lord." It embraces whatever God has revealed of his government; it commences on earth, and is consummated in the end of all sin and rebellion, and the introduction of the reign of universal holiness and

bliss. This reign of God is, as yet, neither known nor appreciated, except by a small portion of the family of man; and many are the disobedient subjects of this kingdom, even among those to whom it has been communicated.

To be actually under the control and government of God, in the primary sense, as all men are, is one thing: but to know his will and pleasure; to be made acquainted with his purposes; to have his laws written upon the heart; to know that this kingdom is set up in our own souls, and that we do indeed possess it, and live by it — this is another, and a far different thing. And this is the state of those of whom the Saviour said, in the text, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." They know the reign of God as presented in the gospel of Christ; and, having the key to unlock its mysteries, that kingdom is theirs. This will bring us to consider —

II. The poor in spirit.

Poverty of spirit consists of a deep sense of our spiritual wants and weaknesses, and of our constant and entire dependence upon God. It recognizes the reign of God in all things; and,

renouncing reliance upon self, it leans, with confiding faith and hope, upon the strong arm of God. It stands opposed to that pride of intellect, which makes a man think that he can set up for himself, and by the aid of his own powers fathom all the mysteries of the Divine government; and that he has no need of the guidance of the revelations of heaven: as, also, to that spiritual pride, which puffs up with an idea of our own power, and makes one imagine that he is equal to any and every emergency; and that he is able, of himself, to battle with temptation and sin; or wrestle successfully with "spiritual wickedness," and "principalities and powers," and the "rulers of the darkness of this world." Poverty of spirit, on the contrary, rejects the idea that man can stand in his own strength alone, and subdue his spiritual enemies without the aid that comes from God. It feels its weakness, and turns ever to the Lord for help and support; and remembers that every power and faculty is given of God, and is to be exercised only in subserviency to his all perfect and universal government.

On the other hand, it is equally removed from

a low and mean spiritedness — a craven, cowardly spirit of fear, which cowers down, afraid at the presence or approach of an enemy, or a difficulty, and dare not look up to heaven for aid, or trust in the power of God. *This* estimates the spirit as much too low, as the other too high. *One* rejects the wisdom of God, because it fancies itself wise enough without it. *The other* passes this wisdom by, because it deems itself too much the fool to learn even that which has been revealed. *One* spurns all aid from God, because it imagines itself a spiritual Samson, or a son of Anak, strong enough already. *The other* cringes and faints, and has not enough of energy to avail itself of the aid of God, when freely offered. True poverty of spirit knows its weakness, and its strength also; but is humble under the knowledge of the fact, that its power is in God; and to him it gives the glory of all its victories. While it feels that, in and of itself, it can do but little, it puts on a cheerful courage, and goes to its work rejoicing in the consciousness that it can do all things, through him by whom it is strengthened.

Such are the "poor in spirit;" and now, I

desire you to perceive the truth, that such, and such only, are the men of whom it can be said, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

We have seen that the kingdom of heaven is the reign of God, as manifested in the dispensation of the gospel of Christ. This is the kingdom which the prophet said the God of heaven should set up on earth, and which all thrones and dominions should ultimately obey. And the idea I wish to illustrate is, that poverty of spirit is indispensable in the man who would enter into, possess, or enjoy this kingdom.

Consider the indications of this truth in the Old Testament. What warnings there are against a spirit of boasting, pride, and self-confidence! And what promises of God, that he will be graciously near, and reveal himself to those that are of an humble spirit! "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." "For thus saith the high and the lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the

spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the place of my rest? Where is the house that ye build me? For all these things hath my hand made, and all these things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." Such are a few of the testimonies of the elder Scriptures, indicating most clearly, that God reveals himself in a peculiar manner to the poor in spirit, and that this poverty of spirit is indispensable to a perception of the presence of God, or the possession and enjoyment of his kingdom, as it was revealed of old.

If we turn to the Scriptures of the New Testament, we shall find this principle still more clearly illustrated. Christ stands there as a teacher sent from God, bearing a commission sealed with the signet of the court of heaven. From that high eminence, he looks down upon the wisdom of the world, and all the efforts of the most mighty intellects of earth, as shadows

beneath him, and calls to the wise, as well as the simple, saying, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly of heart." And who does not see that a teachable disposition — a lowly spirit, sensible of its wants and weakness, and willing to sit at his feet, and learn of him — is the first and most important requisite in those who would understand his Gospel, and possess the "kingdom of heaven," as it was by him unfolded?

For this reason it was, that he took a little child and sat it in the midst of his disciples, and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and, again, "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." The little child is poor in spirit, and of a teachable disposition. This kingdom of heaven is something to be learned; and it is manifest, that no man can be expected to learn, unless he is first willing to be taught. For this cause, the spiritually proud, who fancied that they were already wise and rich, in all spiritual gifts and graces, turned a deaf ear to the instructions of the Master, and thus shut the door of entrance to his kingdom, "neither

going in themselves, nor suffering others to enter," if by any means they could prevent it.

In this light, it is easy to see why the Gospel was "hid from the wise and prudent," and "revealed unto babes." These babes were poor in spirit, and willing to learn. And here, also, you can see the truth and beauty of the text — "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" for it is evident that they, and they *only*, were in a condition to receive or enjoy its riches of truth.

Nor is this an arbitrary arrangement, which selects and blesses a few favorites, and withholds its blessings from all others. But it is founded upon that irreversible law of man's being, which declares that the man who would be wise must learn; and that other law, equally immutable, which affirms that he who would learn must be "poor in spirit;" feel his ignorance, know his wants, and be willing to be taught.

This law is no more true in religion than in every department of knowledge. The man who would be wise, in the wisdom of the world, must, first of all, feel his ignorance — must understand

that, so far as knowledge is concerned, he is poor and needy. He must be anxious to learn, and willing to be taught; and, in childlike simplicity, gird himself to the work, and study to be wise. But the men who are puffed up with an idea of their own superior wisdom, and that they are already sages, — the "skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn," — how can it be expected, that they should unlock the mysteries of knowledge, or explore or possess the kingdom of science? Nay, but the riches of that kingdom are reserved for the humble and teachable.

It is observable, also, that the truly wise man is always humble, and feels his poverty of spirit. The more a man really knows, the more does he see to be known, and the more sensible is he of the limited character of all his attainments; so that it may be said truly, that the height of human wisdom is "to know how little can be known." See you a man full of boasting self-confidence — vain of his knowledge, and, in his own estimation, past being taught — you may know, for a certainty, that he is but a superficial smatterer, rather than a profound and thorough philosopher.

The latter is always modest and humble; never proud of his attainments, or over-confident in his powers of investigation, or of the soundness of his conclusion. He knows enough to be aware of the liability of man to err, and of the impossibility of exhausting the fountains of knowledge. For such as these, the kingdom of science is reserved, and such only can enter and possess that kingdom.

Why should it be otherwise in religion? Why should it be thought, that God should here depart from the clearest laws of human being, and, by a fiat of omnipotence, force upon men, who will not learn, a knowledge of his laws and his government? He is consistent in all things; and here, as in everything else, he that will not sow may not reap; and the man who, from an excess of spiritual pride, will not learn, must be content to be a fool; and God will leave the fool in his folly, until, taught by sad experience, he shall discover his need, and be willing to be instructed of God, in order to be wise unto salvation.

I cannot avoid thinking that this vaunting of the human intellect — this spiritual self-suf-

ficiency, which seeks ever to grasp the infinite with the finite, and measure God by the span of a human mind — deems itself equal to the discovery of all truth, and wise enough without revelation, if not wiser than revelation itself — is, at the present day, one of the most formidable obstacles in the way of the progress of the true knowledge of the kingdom of the Redeemer. A poor and humble spirit, which knows its wants and weaknesses, and which is lowly and teachable, can alone unlock the mysteries of the Divine government, and come to a sacred nearness to God, and be wise in his wisdom and pure in his holiness.

For this reason, and with the most perfect truth, did Jesus say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

SERMON II.

COMFORT FOR MOURNERS.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
MATT. 5: 4.

THIS world was never made for the dwelling-place of pure and uninterrupted felicity. I dwell not upon the why, or the wherefore, but content myself with a simple statement of the fact, that the Creator has been pleased so to order his government, that mourning and sorrow should fall to the lot of man on earth. Of this truth, the experience of all ages is the unerring witness; for the pages of man's history, from the beginning, are wet with many tears. We may dream of happiness unalloyed, as we will, and imagination may depict a region where sorrow never comes, and tears never flow. But that land is not on earth; and dream we never so much, we must open our waking eyes upon the stern truth, that the mourners are everywhere around us, and we breathe not a breath, our hearts beat not with a

single pulsation, when there are not, at that moment, other hearts which are breaking with sorrow.

Blessed words were they, which came from the lips of the world's Redeemer, pronouncing a benediction upon those that are worn and weary with mourning. And the more especially precious are those words, when we consider them as indicative of the true character of that religion, of which he was the messenger.

The Gospel is, indeed, man's best comforter, and its great ministry is, to bind up the bleeding heart. Hence the Saviour said, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound."

And so the apostle, referring to the Gospel which God preached to Abraham, says, "Because he could swear by none greater, he sware by himself; that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have *strong consolation*, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us." This was

the design of the proclamation of the Gospel, in ancient times; and the text indicates, that Jesus, when he pronounced the blessing upon those that mourn, was "about the Father's business." This was no casual remark, merely, but an assertion of one great object of his mission — a declaration of one among the blessed ministries of his Gospel.

I cannot pause, in the present discourse, to consider the fact, that men have shorn the Gospel of its power, by divesting it of its comforting influences; nor even to lament that fatal apostacy from the true religion of the Son of Man, which has presented no word of hope or comfort to the countless thousands who mourn; but, on the contrary, presents them with the dreary prospect of an eternity of sorrow and mourning, in comparison with which, all the anguish of earth is but a drop before the copious shower. All that need be said is, that any system, which has no comfort for those that mourn, is far, very far, from the true Gospel of Christ.

The poet has said that "Man was made to mourn," and I will not take it upon me to dispute

the correctness of the sentiment. But I will say, if man was made to mourn, the Gospel was made to comfort him. If man was born to sorrow, he was born to an inheritance of blessedness; for "Blessed are they that mourn," saith the text.

I had occasion, in a previous discourse, to remark, that all these Beatitudes were founded upon a deep and true insight into the mysteries of the Divine government; so that there is nothing arbitrary in them, but, in each case, the blessing pronounced is precisely such as naturally and necessarily belongs to the character to which it is assigned.

To those who are in the habit of looking upon the sorrows of this world as *real*, *positive* evils, sent upon man as the evidences of Divine wrath, it may appear something like a paradox to say that mourners are blessed. Yet I hope to be able to show you that this is really the fact, and that, too, without any arbitrary arrangement, or any departure from the fixed and unchanging principles of the Divine government, as they are revealed in Christ.

This is the leading idea, that I would wish to

develop and illustrate, in the present discourse; and in order to do this as clearly as possible, I ask your attention to the following particulars, in regard to the heart-cheering and blessed words of my text.

I. The text is not partial, or limited in its application.

The intimation is, not that there are some cases in which the mourners may be comforted, and others, where consolation can never find its way; but it is set forth as a universal truth, that those who mourn are blessed, from the fact that they shall be comforted. Nor is there any discrimination as to the cause, or causes, of their mourning. They are many.

Some mourn their follies past, and shed bitter tears over their aberrations from the path of duty. Privileges neglected — time wasted or misspent — sins committed — blessings despised — cause many a soul to bow in grief and sorrow. Some mourn the loss of a good name, filched from them by the slanderer's arts. Some mourn the loss of earthly goods, and weep for the riches, that have taken to themselves wings and gone away.

Some mourn the loss of companions and friends, near and dear to their hearts, who have been taken from them by death. The husband weeps for a wife, who has departed; and the widow pours out her tears, at the grave of her stay and support. The parent mourns for the loss of children; and orphans lift up their cries of anguish, at the tomb of parents dead. And all these causes of mourning are continually active in the world, and conspire to render it, in some degree at least, what it is so often called — "a vale of tears." But the text discriminates not, among these sorrows. Whoever it may be, *whatever* the cause of mourning, and however deep or pungent the sorrow, there is "a balm in Gilead," — a great "Physician there," — and the word is, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

I cannot help remarking here, that the systems of the wisdom of men have no such fulness and efficacy. To some mourners, and under some circumstances, they have a word of comfort; but, to others, there is none. Take, for example, those who mourn the loss of friends, who were

dear and precious in their sight. Their idols are shattered, and they weep tears of bitter anguish for the dead. To some, who are thus situated, these systems can come with the comforting assurance, that it is well with the departed, and that they have gone to another and a better world.

But there are cases, and they, too, by far the most numerous, where there is no ray of hope gleaming upon the night of sorrow. The departed and dear one died, without having performed the conditions which are thought indispensable to the future welfare of the soul; and in vain do the mourners turn their weeping eyes to these systems for consolation. No word can they utter, except that awful word, which renders sorrow doubly deep, and probes the heart anew with the reflection, that the departed has gone to an endless night, dark as Erebus, and miserable as nature can endure. Call you this comfort for the mourner? In view of it, can it be said, in the broad sense of the text, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted?" Nay.

But Jesus had a word of comfort for all that mourn, and in his gospel there is

> "A sovereign balm for every wound—
> A cordial for our fears."

To that blessed source of heavenly consolation, let earth's sad and sorrowing children apply, and it shall never be in vain.

II. The language of the text is not doubtful.

The Saviour saith, not that there is a source of comfort for all that mourn, provided in such a manner, that they may be comforted, if they will apply for it. This is undoubtedly true; and if it extended no further, it would be a rich boon from God to man. But this is not the whole truth; it reaches further, and goes deeper than this. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they *shall be* comforted." The healing balm is not only provided; but such is the plan of God, and such the perfect arrangement of his most wise and holy government, that it shall ultimately be applied to every bleeding heart, and earth's mourners shall all be comforted. To many, the word of comfort comes richly on earth; but to many more, that word speaks not in this world. The heathen go

down to the grave ignorant of God and his word; and the sun of Divine truth shines not upon the darkness of their sorrows; nor are they comforted, in their afflictions, with the bright and cheering hopes of the Gospel. And then, again, there are multitudes in Christian lands, to whom that Gospel is presented in a form so perverted, that it is to them a constant tormentor, rather than a comforter. Many bereaved mothers there are, even in this boasting land of light and truth, who are like "Rachel weeping for her children," and "refusing to be comforted;" not so much "because they are not," as because they believe they are lost — forever lost. And thus they "go mourning all their days;" and, to the hour of their death, there shines not, upon their smitten spirits, a ray of hope, to cheer the gloom of their sorrows. And are these excluded from the blessing of the text? And must the heathen, who go down to the grave, all ignorant of God and smitten with many sorrows, have no part in this benediction of the Master? The text itself is the answer. They mourned in anguish of spirit. They wept many tears, and felt, full long, sorrow

pressing heavily upon their hearts. But, poor, stricken sufferers, though they went down mourning to the grave, "they *shall* be comforted." God himself has determined, that life shall dawn upon the dark night of death; and in the ages of eternity there shall come a time, when "tears shall be wiped from off all faces," and "there shall be no more sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away." This will lead me to note, more at large, that the text is —

III. An indication of a broad and universal principle of the Divine government.

It was not a mere arbitrary juxtaposition of ideas, that led the Saviour to pronounce a blessing upon those that mourn. But the benediction is founded upon a true knowledge of the principles of the government of God, and in the light of that truth alone can we see its propriety.

If we consider the comfort, here noted, as meaning no more than that consolation which comes to the mourners on earth, through faith, it is manifest that it must proceed from a knowledge of the fact that God's government is gra-

cious and wise, and that it embraces the final ingathering of all souls into the fold of eternal life; else, there are a thousand cases, in which the Gospel itself neither has, nor *can have*, a word of comfort for those that mourn. Anything short of a firm conviction of the universal deliverance of humanity from the thraldom of sin and suffering, will falsify the text in many, very many instances.

Take a case in point. Here is a mother mourning the loss of her child. He was a noble boy — the pride of her eyes, and the joy of her heart. But he was cut down in the strength of his youth, and consigned to an early grave. And what renders this affliction still more severe, is the fact, that he died, as the phrase is, without religion, and darkness broods over his future prospects. The mother mourns as mothers only mourn, and deep is the tide of sorrow, that overwhelms her. Now, I say, if there is any meaning in the text at all — if it be worth recording in this sacred volume — then may it be applied here; and the Saviour may be understood as saying, emphatically, to that weeping mourner, "Blessed

art thou: for thou shalt be comforted." But how shall she be comforted? And what is there, in the Gospel, calculated to give consolation, in such sorrow as this? Will it do to reveal the Divine purpose to save a few of his creatures? Will it answer to talk of heaven and its joys, and of hell and its endless woes, and leave the mourner to doubt, which shall be the portion of her beloved child? Is it enough to suspend the issue of that question upon the works, or the experience, of the departed? Nay. Comfort, that can reach her case, must stand upon a more stable foundation than this. It must lean upon the strong arm of a God whose government is so established that, in each and every case, deliverance from all, that can hurt or destroy, is certain to come. It must rest in the conviction, that all the loved and lost are in the care of a God whose mercies never fail, and who, in life or in death, in time or in eternity, will never leave or forsake the creatures that he has made. Give us but one case that the Gospel cannot reach with its comfort — open but one wound for which it has no balm, and the text is falsified. The mourners are no longer blessed,

for they cannot be comforted. Jesus himself has no word of comfort, that he can offer. Talk not to a bereaved mother about comfort, even in the idea of her own salvation; for, except that salvation extends to her child also, it is but idle mockery. Were she in heaven, and he in hell, the bright angels might sing, but there would be no music for her. Her ear would be attentive to the wail that came from beneath; and if, in that burst of woe, she should distinguish the voice of her darling, not all the shining hosts above could prevent her; but, in the insanity of a mother's lacerated heart, she would rush to the verge, and leap from the walls of the eternal city, to save a child, or share his fate in the dread abyss below. Oh! no! no! NO! Do not, I beseech you, tantalize the mourner with such a mockery of comfort as this.

Your faith must go out and embrace a world. It must rest in the Divine purpose, to extend the conquests of his grace, until the last wanderer shall be brought home, and a redeemed and regenerated universe shall bow before him, in thankfulness and joy, and a family, numerous as

the sons and daughters of Adam, shall be in heaven, and no member absent or lost. Anything less than this, will come short of the full meaning of that word, which saith, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

But even this does not cover the whole ground that would seem to be indicated in the text.

We have seen that the word here rendered "blessed" means "happy;" and "Happy are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," would be the better translation. From this, it would seem evident that the Saviour did not look upon the mourning itself as a real evil, but a blessing in disguise, which man was fortunate in possessing.

And here our subject opens upon the great question of the introduction of what we call evil into the world. Evil — what is it? And why came it into being? These are questions, which have long puzzled the world; and which, I make bold to say, can never find a satisfactory answer in any other but that Gospel view, which presents all the evils of the world, not merely in the aspect of positive ills, for which, fortunately, a

remedy has been found; but, also, as entering into the original plan of the Divine mind, and as, *in themselves*, the wise, gracious, necessary, and salutary agencies for the production of good. So, at least, the apostle seems to have considered them, when he gave them as the clearest evidences of the Divine paternity. Thus, "If ye endure chastenings, God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

It seems, then, that the apostle looked upon the evils, that men suffer, as evidences that God was a father, and as being, in themselves, the wise and salutary agents of his parental goodness, designed for the benefit of his children.

Now, when a man is really sick, it is a blessed thing to be healed, and restored to health. But the precise point is not thus presented; for who would consider it a blessed thing to be sick, simply for the sake of being healed? Granted, that the healing was a blessing; but would it not have been better not to have been sick at all?

And so of all the causes of mourning; we need not discriminate, for the text does not, among the evils that make us mourn.

When the heart is smitten, and the head is bowed down with sorrow, it is a blessed boon to be comforted; but who would wish to be afflicted, for the mere pleasure of being comforted? And would it not be better not to be afflicted at all? The text answers, not: "Blessed ARE they that mourn: for they shall be comforted;" and this mourning, itself, shall so promote the best interests of the mourner, as to give him cause to say, "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted." It is as necessary for man that he should suffer, as that he should rejoice, or eat his daily food. Granted, that "No chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous." Nevertheless, it is but the culture of the soul, which enableth it to bring forth an abundant harvest of the "fruits of righteousness." I grant, it may seem hard to shed the bitter tear, and heave the deep sigh of sorrow, when affliction's great deep is broken up upon us; but it is manifest that this is one of the means through which the heart is softened, the

will acquires habits of submission and obedience, the energies of the soul are called into exercise, and all its powers are developed, strengthened, and matured, until we become perfect men. Without the sufferings of life, there could be no sympathy, no *charity*, no hope, no opportunity for the exercise of all those finer and better feelings, which so exalt and ennoble human nature, and from which our most refined enjoyments proceed. And hence, they are blessed, who are permitted to purchase so rich a boon, at a price so low. That blessed boon will last forever, and grow brighter, and purer, as the ages of eternity shall pass away; and it was purchased by sorrow, or suffering, that endured but a moment. And hence the Apostle said, "These light afflictions, which endure but a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" and he reckoned them "not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed."

Should it still be asked, why God did not so make man, that it should not be necessary for him to suffer?

I answer, God only knows the why and where-

fore. You might as well ask, why he did not first make a full-grown man, so that he need not be a child, and of necessity grow to become a man? And all I can say is, The Eternal Law is one of progressive development. *Why* that is the law, I know not. God knows.

That God could have made man, at once, an angel, I doubt not. But, then, the earth would not have been his dwelling-place. But since it hath pleased the Infinite One to unite the spirit with the flesh here, we have a right to presume that he had a good end in view, and that all the sufferings attendant upon that union were foreseen, and shall minister to that end.

Take the physical pains that we suffer. It is no irreverence to say, that, made as our bodies are of perishable materials, God himself could not so make them, that they should not be subject to certain organic and physiological laws and conditions. Moving, as they do, in the elements, they must needs be subject to decay and death.

Were they not liable to pain, there would be no notice, when danger approached. It was therefore wise and good, in God, to make nerves,

and place them as sentinels, to guard the avenues of life; and to perform the double office, of giving us all the physical pleasure we enjoy, and of sounding the alarm, when an enemy approaches. Who would have it otherwise, and be free from pain; so that he might burn or freeze, and not know that he was hot, or cold?

The same principle will apply to all of evil that we suffer. God has sent it, and it has a mission of mercy to perform, and it shall conduce to our good. In this light alone, can you see with what propriety the Saviour said, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Ah! yes, they shall be comforted, for their tears shall be wiped away; and then shall they see, that their sorrow itself was but a blessing, whose agency for good they did not perceive; and that, all evil, every cause of mourning and sorrow, was sent on an errand of mercy; and, having performed its work, it shall assume its true form, and the world shall be the gainer by its mission.

SERMON III.

MEEKNESS.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
MATT. 5: 5.

ST. PAUL, in one of his epistles, says, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel, which was preached of me, is not after man." In no part of the New Testament is the truth of this sentiment more clearly manifest, than in Christ's Sermon on the Mount; and especially in that part of it, called the Beatitudes, which is the theme of the present series of discourses. Had a man, rich in the wisdom of the world, been placed upon an eminence, where he could look down upon a busy world, and behold all the inhabitants thereof, as they appeared in themselves, and moved in their various spheres and pursuits; and had he been called upon to point out those that were peculiarly blessed of God, there is no doubt, that the characters selected would have been widely different from those, upon whom the Saviour has

pronounced his choicest benedictions. Instead of the "poor in spirit," the "mourners," and the "meek," we should have had the "proud," the "prosperous," and the "vaulting spirits," as the fortunate men; while the former would have been passed by, as unworthy of notice, except in pity or sorrow. Yet these are they, upon whom fell the benediction of the Redeemer, who spake as never man spake, before him; and it will appear, in the progress of these lectures, that however much these Beatitudes may vary from the accepted and popular maxims of the world, they are, nevertheless, dictated by the spirit of a true and unerring wisdom, which the world has not yet attained.

In considering the passage selected as the theme of the present labor, it is only necessary to define its terms, in order to perceive its truth and propriety.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

I. Who are the meek? And what is it to inherit the earth? These are the questions, that will now claim our attention.

Meekness, as a theological term, is used to indicate "a temper of mind not easily provoked to resentment." It is an *easiness* of spirit, which accommodates the soul to every occurrence, and so, makes a man easy to himself, and to all about him. "Where this grace of meekness reigns, it subdues the impetuous disposition, and inspires it with submission and forgiveness." "It teaches us to govern our own anger, when we are provoked, and patiently to bear the anger of others, that it may not be a provocation to us." The meek man is not easily disturbed, or thrown off his guard. He is prepared for whatever event may occur. He looks upon all things, as being under the wise and benevolent government of a Gracious Father; and with a sense of his own weakness, and also of his strength, he bows in submission to the will of God, and patiently endures, what he sees that he cannot cure. His spirit is trained to adjust itself with ease, and without murmuring or complaint, to all the events of the Divine reign. If prosperity attends him, he is still modest, and humble; not elated with an excess of joy, or moved to an ostentatious display

of his success. If misfortune or poverty comes, he meets it without a murmur or complaint, and bows his head, in quiet and gentle submission, to the evils, that he cannot avoid. And so, in every event of life, you find him the same quiet and humble, contented and satisfied man, whose mien declares more plainly than words, that, whatever may be *without*, there is sunshine *within;* and that he is

> "Resigned when blessings are denied,
> And pleased with favors given."

This meekness of soul is a virtue not often seen, in an eminent degree; and it must be confessed, that, except in a few cases of peculiarly gentle natures, it is not easily obtained. So boisterous and excitable are the passions of man, — so determined is the human will, and so impatient is the soul for the immediate possession of all it covets, and the removal of all that is calculated to disturb our peace, — that the truly meek man, who is easily, and without a murmur, adjusted to any and all conditions, is a rare specimen of humanity.

There are *proud* men, who are ashamed to

weep or rejoice, — and there are stoics, who consider it degrading to be affected by the common sympathies and passions of humanity; and these may appear to wear the semblance of contentment and quietness. But it is the outward appearance, the surface only, that is calm. Below, and *within*, the storm may rage, and the waters move with the deep heavings of the smothered tempest. But the outward demeanor of the truly meek man, is the index of all that is within. His inmost soul feels submission to that Divine will, whose undeviating goodness it cannot question; and with unresisting and uncomplaining confidence, it bends to that will; and if weep it must, the sun of hope paints its bow of promise upon the tear-drop, that trembles in that calm and trusting eye. Not like the stubborn oak, which spreads abroad its hundred giant arms, and wrestles with the storm, and beats back the furious wind, and still stands erect, hurling defiance at the thunder-bolt; but like the slender bush, which bends to the breeze, and adapts itself to take gently the wind, blow whence it may; — so stands the man of a meek and quiet spirit, meeting all the ills of life

with quietness, and readily adjusting himself to all that God may send upon him.

This is meekness; and we now come to inquire —

II. What is it to inherit the earth, in the sense of the text?

The phrase, "inherit the earth," is frequently used, in the Old Testament, to denote a long life, on earth. In the thirty-seventh Psalm, it occurs several times, in this sense. "For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, shall inherit the earth." (Verse 9.) In this passage, it appears evident, that the Psalmist intended to say, that while the evil doers should be cut off, those who waited upon the Lord should continue to live, upon the earth. Again, we may read, "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Verses 10, 11.) That is to say, while the wicked shall die, and their places on earth shall be known no more, the meek shall

live long, and delight themselves in the enjoyment of an abundant peace.

Again. "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be forever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine shall they be satisfied. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. For such as are blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off." (Verses 18—21.) In these instances, inheriting the earth stands opposed to being "cut off," "consumed," &c., and is doubtless intended to be understood, as meaning a long continuance upon earth.

I see no impropriety in understanding the Saviour to use the phrase in this sense, in the text. There is no doctrine more frequently or clearly set forth, in Scripture, than that which teaches, that "righteousness tendeth to life," and that the natural tendency of all sorts of wickedness is to death.

From Sinai, of old, God spoke to his people,

saying, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land." And so, of the righteous man it is said, "He shall not be afraid of the pestilence, that walketh in darkness, nor of the destruction, that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall by his side, and ten thousand at his right hand; but it shall not come nigh him. I will deliver him, and honor him; with long life will I satisfy him." "My son, forget not my law, but let thy heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add unto thee."

Such are a few of the passages where the great principle is recognized, that the tendency of righteousness is to prolong human life on earth; and, on the other hand, the testimony is equally explicit, that "The wicked shall not live out half their days." They shall be "cut off in the midst of their days, and destroyed from the earth."

And now, what I wish to say is, if the Saviour used the phrase "inherit the earth," in the sense of living a long life in this world, he has selected, among all the virtues, the very one, most conducive to this end; and pronounced the blessing

upon the very men who, in the ordinary course of nature and Providence, are the most likely to enjoy it.

If you reflect, for a moment, upon the causes, that conspire to shorten human life, on the one hand, or prolong it, on the other, you will perceive that, of all others, the meek man is in possession of most of the one, and exposed to least of the other. Is it war, that slays its thousands and millions — that cuts down the young man in his strength, and offers up its huge hecatombs on its bloody altar, and thus does its wide and dreadful work of death? The meek man is not there. He possesses not the spirit that will embroil nations in war, or lead him to seek renown in the field of deadly strife. War may come, and, with many others, he may suffer some of its dreadful evils. But of its spirit he cannot partake; and in its hottest strife, and most harassing danger and toil, he will not partake. He may be the martyr, who will go up to the altar, with an unfaltering step, and lay down his life for the good of his country, or his race; but the hero of many battles — the toil-worn, scarred, wounded victim of

war's hellish strife — he cannot be. Nor is the field of battle the bed, or the soldier's helmet the dying pillow, of him whose spirit is *meek* and lowly, as was that of him of Nazareth.

Is it pestilence, that sweeps over the land, and makes every city a charnel-house for the dead — hurrying all ages, ranks, and conditions of men, into the grave? Still, a meek and quiet spirit is the surest safeguard, and the best preventive. This truth has been abundantly verified in the observation or the experience of most of us. When the dreaded Cholera has raged, who were they, that fell most easily and readily a prey to the destroying angel? Who, but those who were most easily disturbed and excited in mind, and whose feelings were wrought upon most powerfully? And who were they, of whom it could be said that "a thousand fell by their side, but it came not near them?" Who, but those whose spirits meekly, and calmly, leaned on God? These were they that were "not afraid of the pestilence when it walked in darkness," and whose minds were calm and undisturbed by the presence or approach of danger. Yea, it was the meek,

that it passed by, and left still to inherit the earth. I do not say, of course, that this was uniformly the case, or that there were no exceptions to this rule; but I do say, and all medical experience and observation will bear me out in the assertion, that among the predisposing causes to this dreadful pestilence, undue excitement and fear stand preëminent; and that, of all preventives, the safest, and most reliable, is a meek, quiet and undisturbed spirit. I have been in the midst of its ravages. I have seen it full often, in all its phases. I have breathed the air, that seemed laden with its deadly virus, and have looked upon the dying and the dead, all around me; and, were it raging here to-day and were I asked to lay my finger upon the man who, of all others, would be most likely to escape its ravages, and inherit the earth, for many years, I would seek out, not the young or strong, the robust and hardy men, of iron frame and sound constitution; but I would search for a meek and quiet spirit — a man not easily disturbed or excited — a man whose feelings were under subjection, and brought to the obedience of a gentle spirit; and, with more

confidence than in any other case, would I point to him and say, Let the pestilence rage — it shall not come near him. Others may die; but he shall still inherit the earth. And I should be borne out in it, not merely by the language of the text, but by all philosophy, and all medical experience and observation.

What is true of this, is, at least, measurably true of all the diseases, that "flesh is heir to." Excitement and boisterous passion are the messengers, that invite them to come, and the porters that open the doors, for their admittance.

There is an intimate connection between the state of the mind, and the health of the body, which cannot escape the notice of the critical observer, and is worthy, perhaps, of more attention than it has as yet received. The stormy and violent passions boil the blood, and pour a mortal poison through all the channels of healthful existence. A violent fever, and even instant death, have been caused by sudden anger. In fact, he that gives loose reins to his passions lives in a perpetual fever, which will wear out the frail

body, so that he may not hope, long to inherit the earth.

Look at the general facts, applicable to the point in hand. Take your men of eighty, ninety, and an hundred years, and, as a general rule, they are men, who have been remarkable for the calmness and equanimity of their minds. They have been men of cheerfulness and contentment, readily adapting themselves to circumstances, making the best of everything, and not easily disturbed by the baser passions. In short, they have presented more than an ordinary share of that virtue, which is called meekness in the text. And their silver locks, and venerable forms, yet comparatively erect, and their countenances, beaming with a serene and holy peace, calm as the setting sun, are the living, tangible witnesses of him, who singled out such as the heirs of a long life, when he said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

Exceptions, I grant, there may be, as there are to all general rules; but yet experience and observation prove, that this is the rule.

I observe, again, — It is not unlikely, that the

Saviour used the phrase "inherit the earth" in a sense of intensity, as synonymous with enjoying the earth, in the same manner as we use the word *live*, in a similar sense. As, for instance, "The wicked may dwell in the earth; but the virtuous only *live;*" that is, they only enjoy life. In this sense, the text will teach, that the meek are blessed, because they, of all others, most richly enjoy the earth. A man may possess much, and yet really enjoy nothing. He may have a title to his "broad acres," extending far as the eye can reach; and that title may be drawn out, in legal phrase and form, on paper, or parchment — it may be attested by the magistrate — it may be signed, sealed, and delivered, according to all the niceties of the law; ay, and recorded too in huge volumes, bound in durable calf, and labelled "Deeds!" "Deeds!" in letters of gold, and securely kept in vaults, where neither thieves nor the elements can enter; and after all, so far as the enjoyment of his possessions is concerned, he may be poorer than the humble laborer, who cultivates his single rood by the wayside. His paper title cannot give him the real inherit-

ance of a single inch more of God's earth than he can usefully occupy; and a small portion is enough for that end; and the time is close at hand, when a few square feet will answer all his purposes, on earth. Some six feet long, and a couple wide, will be as much as any of us will need, a few years hence. But there is one end, that these paper titles can subserve. They can stand as idle cumberers of the ground, driving men into servitude and oppression — robbing multitudes of their possessions — leaving vast portions of the earth waste and desolate — neither laboring themselves, nor suffering those who would, to cultivate the soil; and thus leaving to noxious weeds, and briars, and thorns, what would be a fruitful field, but for the thing therein written.

They may even do more than this. As the world goes, they may enter into the marts of trade, and, in the traffic of men, they may be exchanged for a given quantity of a yellow metal, called gold, but which is in itself neither food, or drink, or clothing; and I will not say that it is not about an even bargain, that makes the ex-

change. That heap of gold, though piled high as Atlas, can no more minister to the real possessions of the man, than his bit of parchment; and is as utterly barren of happiness, as the most desolate tract of his unoccupied land.

But there is a title to this earth older than this. It was written by the finger of God, on the morning of creation, and it comes to us under the seal and signet of the King of kings and the Lord of lords; for God gave to man, — ay, to the whole race, as represented in their federal head, — the earth, and bade him have dominion over it, and to multiply, replenish, and subdue it. That title will remain, when the moth shall have eaten your parchments, and the vaults of iron and granite, where they are so carefully kept, shall have mouldered to their native dust. This is the gift of God to man. This, the possession of which we are the heirs; and it is for each man to say, whether he will enter upon, and enjoy his inheritance. The meek, and the meek only, can do this, as will appear from a moment's reflection. We have seen, that meekness is a temper of mind not easily provoked. It gives a flexibility and

easiness of spirit, which adjusts itself to circumstances. It bears all things with patience and resignation, subdues the impetuous passions, and gives a serene and calm contentment to the soul. Now, let a man who is rich, in this virtue, take his stand upon yonder eminence, that overlooks the surrounding country. Let him go there, when the earth is green and beautiful, — the morning sun is rising, and creation is awakening to life; or, when the evening shadows are falling around him, and the last rays of the "God of day" linger and play upon the summit of the distant mountains. He surveys the scene with a grateful and contented heart. He listens to the songs of the birds, the murmuring waterfall, the rustling of the evening breeze, the hum of busy industry, the bleating flocks and lowing herds. He surveys the landscape, the earth and the heavens, and says, in spirit, "These are thy gifts, O God! to man;" and his soul is filled with love and praise.

What cares he, that the laws of man give him not a title to all around him? What is it to him, that in yonder vault there is a paltry parchment

which says that this acre belongs to A, and that, to B, and so on, to the end of the alphabet? The world is not less beautiful, nor the breeze less refreshing, nor does the morning or evening smile less gayly or serenely, or the birds sing less sweetly, on that account. Whatever the parchment may say, he *possesses* — he truly inherits, and richly enjoys, the whole, by a higher title; for God has decreed, that the meek shall inherit the earth — nor is it in the power of man to rob him of this, his possession. But take, on the other hand, the man whose untamed passions lead him ever to "vault to the skies" — whose greedy lust of gain has made gold his idol — who covets all that he sees, and who, if this world were his, would weep, that there was not another for him to filch from its occupants. And of what avail is it to him, so far as his enjoyments are concerned, that he is nominally the owner of a state? His titles may lay there, and moulder away, but not a foot more of earth can he inherit *really*, than what he can usefully occupy. His house may be a palace, and his garden a paradise; but, to his familiar eye, it speaks not with

half the pleasure that it gives the passing traveller. While he views it with gloating pride, the meek and contented beholder traces forms of beauty that speak to the heart, and make him feel, that it is a goodly inheritance which God has given. So, then, it is really true that, for all the purposes that an inheritance is useful, all things are available to the meek; and the Saviour said truly, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

SERMON IV.

HUNGERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. MATT. 5: 6.

THE term "righteousness," as it occurs in this passage, may be understood, as embracing all the moral excellences, of which the human soul is capable. It is an internal matter, which pertains to the man himself, and should be distinguished from those "works of righteousness," which are the *fruits* of this spirit. It is granted, that these works will flow out, spontaneously, from the truly righteous soul, and they are the best evidence of rectitude of spirit; yet they are not the substance of the thing itself, more than the fruit is the tree. The tree, indeed, may be "known by its fruit;" for "grapes do not grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles." But there is a distinction necessary to be made, between the grape and the vine, or the fig and the tree, upon which it grows. There may be a vine, or a fig-tree, in a climate so inhos-

pitable, or in a situation so unpropitious, that it shall produce no fruit; and yet it may be a real, genuine vine or fig-tree.

So there may be a man in such circumstances, that he can perform no works of righteousness, in the common acceptation of that term. He may be immured in a dungeon, and cut off from all intercourse with his fellow-men. He may be lost in the wilderness, dwelling upon a solitary island in the midst of the sea, or, low upon a bed of sickness, and unable to perform the least work of mercy, or even of justice, to his fellow-men; nevertheless, his heart may be all right with God, and his soul may be filled with righteousness. Let but the opportunity occur, and this righteousness will show itself in its appropriate works; and thus, bring forth fruit in the same manner that the vine will bring forth grapes, when planted in a congenial soil and proper climate.

Ordinarily speaking, there is no lack of opportunity for real righteousness of soul to manifest itself in works. For our present purpose, however, it seems necessary to distinguish between

these works and their cause; inasmuch as it may happen, that an unrighteous man may, from interested and base motives, perform deeds which are, in themselves, identical with works of righteousness. It is proper, therefore, to say, that the righteousness contemplated in the text is not a mere outward affair, but it is that conformity to all the principles of truth and duty, which attaches itself to the inner man; and which manifests itself, as time and opportunity permit, in works of mercy, love, truth, and justice. It is not merely an outward act; but it is the spirit, itself, of which the act is the outward expression — a spirit harmonious with all the principles of the Divine government, and with all that is right, good, and true.

The doctrine of the text is, that this spirit is, in and of itself, desirable, and that they are peculiarly blessed, who possess it: and, also, that it is to be obtained, in its fulness, only by those who hunger and thirst after it.

I have more than once had occasion to notice the wide difference, that exists between the instructions of Christ, and those of other religious

teachers; and in no aspect does that difference appear more palpable, than as exhibited in relation to the subject now in hand. The points of contrast are many, and the mistakes of men have been well-nigh fatal to the cause of righteousness in the world. Some of these, it may be proper to notice, in order to place the subject in its true light before you.

I. In regard to righteousness, itself, the idea has been, that it is an outward matter, having little or no connection with the heart.

If you will reflect for a moment, you will find this pernicious error running through all the systems of the world, and leavening them, in a greater or less degree, from the beginning to the end. Their great object is, not to fill the soul with love, joy, truth, mercy, justice, and all duty, and thus, to mould the spirit into conformity with that which is good and true; but it is to produce an outward conformity to certain arbitrary rites; and the worst of it is, that these rites, themselves, are matters of little or no importance, and in most instances, far as the east is from the west, from the

works of a genuine and true righteousness. No matter about the heart, so that the knee bends at the altar, and the hand slays its victim there. No matter what is in the soul, so that it is secret, and the body is obedient to a round of observances. This is the fatal defect of Islamism. Many good precepts are therein given, for the regulation of the hands, under certain circumstances; but, as a system, it regards not man's heart, seeks not to build up *there*, the kingdom of eternal righteousness; but, on the contrary, it exalts empty forms and ceremonies, into the essential things in religion, and pronounces its choicest blessings, not upon those whose hearts are right with God, but upon those who are most punctilious in the observance of its arbitrary rites. No matter where the heart is; the lips have only to confess, saying, "There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his Prophet," and a man becomes, at once, one of "the faithful." No matter, though the words were uttered *only* with the lips, while the soul believed they were false as sin — it is enough, that the mouth has made the confession; and if, thereafter, the knees

shall bend, and the body fast and pray, as directed by the Koran, then is the prophet's blessing secure.

The same principle is but too true, in its application to the theory and practice of the Christian Church. The great business of the Catholic church is, to keep men true to the outward profession of a creed, or formula of faith; and the great duties enjoined are such as may be as easily, and as well, performed by the vilest sinner, as the most pious saint. The observance of fasts and holidays, attendance upon mass, the repetition of paternosters, and prayers, and outward submission to the authority of the church — *these* are the great essentials, without which, no man can be allowed to hope for salvation, or claim to be a disciple of Christ; and with which, the vilest knave, whose heart is full of all uncleanness, may receive the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" and that, too, as it is claimed, by regular "apostolic succession."

Nor can the Protestant world claim freedom from this pernicious error. Much, indeed, is said about "the conversion of the soul," and strenu-

ously is it insisted, that a sudden and mysterious change of heart, is the great essential of religion. But, after all, orthodoxy of faith, in profession, fealty to a sect or party, attendance upon certain forms and ceremonies, the observance of rites, and utterance of prayers and exhortations — *these* are the practically important matters; and it is an easy thing for the vilest man to come up to the standard of righteousness, and pass for a Christian *par excellence*.

Let a man, for instance, come out and make an open profession of religion, and attach himself to a church deemed orthodox in faith. Let him give liberally of his substance, for the promotion of the sectarian objects of the day — let him be seen regularly, and with reverent air, at the sanctuary, on the Sabbath — let him pray often, and, if need be, long and loud; and to him will the church point, as the righteous man. All this time, he may, during six days of seven, and in the business of the world, practise, for gain, all sorts of time-honored and law-sanctioned oppression, fraud, and injustice; and still, he will be the

righteous man, in the eyes of the world, and the pride of the church.

Now, it is granted, that, under the best of circumstances, hypocrisy may deceive, and dishonesty may "steal the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in." It is granted, also, that God only can see the heart, and that he alone can know, whether the hidden recesses of the soul are filled with the spirit of righteousness. But the difficulty in this case is, that the things required, as evidences of a pure heart, have not the least *necessary* connection with the heart itself. Whether this profession of an orthodox faith, this observance of forms and ceremonies, this praying and psalm-singing, be called righteousness, or the fruit of righteousness, is of no consequence; for the truth is, it is, *necessarily*, neither one, nor the other, and the mischief consists in the vast importance attached to it. Were real "good works" required, such as dealing justly, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, relieving the poor, and forgiving an enemy, the mistake would be small, if they were considered righteousness, instead of the fruits of righteous-

ness. In this case, even hypocrisy would be obliged to do good in the world, ere it could deceive any. But, as it is, the works required, as righteousness, or the evidences of it, are intrinsically good for nothing; and thus hypocrisy is encouraged, by the very cheapness at which the award of virtue is offered.

Jesus looked away from this outward appearance. He sought to regulate the heart, and he knew right well, that the heart would regulate the hands. Righteousness, with him, had its dwelling in the spirit of man; and vain were all forms, all faith, all devotion, and all zeal, if the heart was not right. And the fruit of righteousness was not much of parade and show, but real solid and substantial works, done for the good of our kindred race; *works*, which even though done by the hypocrite, would come with a blessed influence upon the recipient, and do good in the world. Thus he made righteousness itself a precious boon — a priceless treasure of the soul; and its fruit, not empty and vain forms, but valuable works. And this will lead me to observe,

II. That another error of the world is, in the

supposition, that righteousness is not to be valued for its own sake, but on account of the extra reward attached to it, and the penalty annexed to the want of it.

This error is the legitimate child of the one already named. Man is not so foolish, as to give his labor, and submit to privations, and hardships, without the prospect of receiving something, that he, at least, shall regard as an equivalent. And hence, the venders of a false and spurious righteousness, which is intrinsically good for nothing, have, as a matter of necessity, been compelled to offer an extra bounty to those, who would take it, and threaten punishment to those that refuse. And so it has come to pass, that little attention is paid to the quality of the article; the more important inquiry being, what shall I gain, if I take it? and what shall I suffer, if I do not?

Look, now, at the heathen world, with all their sacrifices, and forms, and labors, — their modes of torture, and their rites of privation; and is it even pretended, that they are, of themselves, and by themselves, good or useful? Do they afford

either pleasure or profit, ease or advantage, to those by whom they are performed? Or is there anything intrinsically good in them? This is not pretended. Why, then, do the altars smoke, until the sun himself is darkened with clouds of incense? Why are the victims offered in huge hecatombs, and the temples filled, and the altars worn with the bended knees of the multitude? Not because the thing itself is valuable, joyous, or pleasant; but because the people hope thus to secure the favor of their gods, and receive an extra bounty for the work, or escape that vengeance, which would follow a neglect of its performance.

And so, of the followers of Mahomet. They labor, not for the good of the work itself, but for the extra reward promised. Why is the mosque filled with worshippers? Why those constant prayers, and ablutions, and bending of the knees? Why that weary pilgrimage to Mecca, and those burdensome rites? Surely, not because the things themselves are pleasant or useful, nor yet, because the hearts of the people are in the work, or their souls love it. But

Paradise, and all the charms of the celestial Houri, are the rewards offered; and hell, with all its torments, the doom threatened for neglect. And this gives life and energy to the system.

Alas! and must it be said, that professors of the Christian religion have involved themselves in a similar error? There is no lack of creeds and professions, of prayers and hymns, and of every form of exertion, in the cause of religion. But the motives in which they originate — what are they? Are the churches filled, because the hearts of the people are there? Is righteousness sought as the pearl of great price, and as being, of itself, more precious than gold? And do men engage in this work for the love of it? Do they hunger and thirst for it, as for their daily food, and feel that their souls need it, for strength, and support, and blessedness, every day? Or are they moved thereunto by the hope of a large bounty, or the fear of a tremendous curse, in another world? If we may credit what men say, there is too much reason to fear, that the latter is, unfortunately, their condition. The loudest professor

does not hesitate to declare, that he can see no sufficient motive for embracing the righteousness of God, without the hope of reward, or the fear of punishment, in another world. Nay, worse than this. He avers, most solemnly, that, were this hope and this fear taken away, he would not, for another day, serve God, or seek after righteousness; but would turn his back upon the one, and trample the other under his feet. I will not pause to ask how much of real righteousness there may be, in a heart thus wedded to sin, and filled with the spirit of disobedience. But I will say, the least that can be made of such language, is an open and graceless confession, that the man has no appreciation of the beauty of holiness — no love of truth and duty, nor the least imaginable hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

And yet, such is the actual state of many, who, with sorrow be it said, have been taught, in the bosom of the Christian church, not, that righteousness is, of itself, the most precious boon that man can possess, but, that it is to be sought and valued solely, or at least mainly, because there is a great

reward promised to those who embrace it, and an awful doom pronounced against those who reject it.

Jesus taught a different doctrine. With him, righteousness was precious, in itself, and abundantly blessed of God was that man who was filled with it. No need had he to bribe men to its acceptance, by proffers of extra rewards, or to frighten men to its embrace, by threats of severe and eternal torments, as the penalty for a refusal.

One more error, and I leave this part of my subject.

III. The belief, that there are certain things which will answer as a substitute for real, pure, and personal righteousness.

The heathen neglects to obey, or commits an offence; and he goes to his altar and offers up a sacrifice, and believes the gods he has offended will accept this, as a valid substitute for what he ought to have done. And among the professors of the Christian name, one finds a substitute, for any lack of personal righteousness, in the works of supererogation performed by others, or in offerings to the church, or in penance and prayers; and

another, in an empty experience, and soundness of faith; and the great mass think that they have discovered an infallible substitute for any amount of deficiency, on their part, in the perfect righteousness of Christ, which God will, on certain conditions, impute to them, and count them righteous, even though, personally, they may be all defiled in sin.

Now, if the view I have given of righteousness, in the beginning of this discourse, is correct, — if, indeed, righteousness is of the heart, and consists in the right affections of the soul, — you will see how utterly impossible it is, that there can be for it any substitute. You might as well talk to a sick man about a substitute for sound health of the body, as to a sinner of a substitute for righteousness. Nay, health alone is what he needs, and health he must have, or he languishes and dies. Or you might as well talk to a hungry man of a substitute for food. Nay, food he needs, and food he must have, and there is no substitute. And so of the soul; it is hungry and sick, and righteousness is its food and health; and there is no such thing, in nature

or grace, as a substitute for this, the one thing needful; nor need you threaten the sick man with perdition, in order to make him choose health, nor promise the hungry man a heaven, in order to make him eat. All you need do is, to satisfy him that righteousness is indeed food to the hungry, and health to the sick in soul, and he will cleave to it, for its own sake.

From the remarks already made, you will perceive how true is the declaration of the Saviour, that they are blessed who hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled; and a few words upon the truth here indicated, that they *only* can be filled, will close our present discourse.

God has so made man, that food and drink are necessary to the health and strength of the body. And in order to secure the partaking of that food and drink, he has given hunger and thirst; and these remind man of his wants, and clamor, with ceaseless importunity, until they are satisfied. This is the only imaginable way in which it could have been made certain that man would be

filled with food. And thus are they blessed who are hungry and thirsty; for they shall be filled.

Suppose you should deprive a man of hunger and thirst, so that he shall have no appetite for food and drink. Food shall present itself to him, not only as indifferent of itself, but positively nauseous. And now you propose to make him eat, by promising him great sums of money, or threatening him with severe punishment, if he refuses. Is there the least probability, that he would love his food, or eat it in such a manner as to insure soundness of health, and firmness and strength of body? Nay, but the only reasonable hope there can be, that man shall be filled with his daily food and drink, must rest upon the fact, that he hungers and thirsts after it.

And precisely so it is, in the case in hand. Present righteousness to man, as a repulsive and bitter thing of itself, and leave him without a desire for it, and vain will it be to bribe him with heaven, or threaten him with hell, as a motive to partake of the bitter thing. But let him see righteousness as it is, the only permanent and real good, the thing to be desired above all else

beneath the sun,— create in him thus an appetite for this "angel's food,"— let his soul long after it, and hunger and thirst for it,— and then you open the only sure prospect that it will be filled.

That this is the only hope, may be seen at a glance. Righteousness is an internal conformity to all that is good and true. Now, let a man endeavor to make himself righteous, for the purpose of securing to himself the reward of a heaven, in another world. Do you not see, that the motive is, in itself, mercenary and selfish, and, as such, utterly subversive of that righteousness which it would promote? Or, let a man attempt to make himself righteous, because he is afraid of hell, in another world, and you perceive, at once, that the motive is but a slavish fear, whose only tendency is to harden the heart, and lead it still further from the righteousness of God.

The truth is, righteousness must be loved and embraced for its own sake, or not at all; and hence, they alone can hope to be filled, who hunger and thirst after it. Here, then, shines the wisdom of the blessed Saviour, and here is presented the true idea of that pure and exalted

righteousness which he enjoins it upon us to seek, as the permanent and only food upon which the soul can live and flourish.

And, in this view, you can see how blessed is that man who hungers and thirsts after righteousness — whose meat and whose drink it is to do the will of God; and also, you can perceive why it is, that such, and such only, may hope to be filled. Why, then, do we spend money for that which is not bread, and labor for that which satisfieth not? Let us hearken diligently unto God, eat that which is good, and let our souls delight themselves in fatness.

SERMON V.

THE MERCIFUL.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. MATT. 5: 7.

MERCY is often called the "darling attribute" of God; and that there is, at least, some propriety in such an appellation, is evident from the fact, that "He delighteth in mercy." Though we may not discriminate between the attributes of God, in such a manner as to exalt one, in point of excellency, above another, yet there is good reason for saying, that mercy comes most near to a manifestation of the Divine nature itself. "God is love;" and love is not so much an attribute of God, as it is the essential element of his being. It is, therefore, unquestionable, that all his attributes are but different modifications or expressions of Divine love, which is the efficient agent at work in all departments of his government; and it receives other names, only because of the circumstances in which it operates, and the forms

it necessarily assumes, to the imperfect vision of man.

There is, in truth, as much of love in the severest inflictions of his justice, as in the most tender exercise of his mercy; and so it would appear to the eye that could look through all forms, and with a direct onsight upon the essence of things. And so of all the attributes of God. A true analysis will resolve them all back to the original element of love; for such is the nature of God. In one, this element may appear more clearly, to our view, than in another; and in mercy, it is most plainly and palpably visible, for there it shines without "a veil between." The circumstances which call out the manifestations of mercy are such, that, in them, the original element of love appears most conspicuously, and in the nearest approximation to its real essence. Love, in God, may be defined to mean the eternal disposition or nature of God to communicate good; and this love flows out ever, and extends to all the creatures whom he has made. Imagine, now, any being to be suffering, or in distress; and to him, this love comes under the name

of Mercy; and it is easy to see, that, in the relief it gives, there are the workings of the Divine nature itself, slightly shaded only by the circumstances under which it is manifested. And if we may presume to offer a reason why God especially "delighteth in mercy," it is because, in its exercise, his ways are not in darkness or obscurity, but in a light that can be seen and appreciated by his children, to the joy of their souls. No tear does it cause to fall, except it be the tear of contrition or gratitude; nor does it inflict a pang, or sorrow, upon the children of men, but for their good.

As mercy, in God, is the most clear and palpable manifestation of the Divine nature, so, in man, it is the highest virtue, and that which raises him to the most near and intimate communion with the Author of his being. In a world of suffering and sin, where all are liable to distress and sorrow, and where pain, sickness, misfortune, death, and woe abound, and fall upon the evil and the good, there is no more appropriate, higher, or holier sphere of human action, than in relieving the sufferings of our brethren; no

diviner virtue, or more exalted sentiment, than that which feels for others' woes, and prompts the willing hands to soothe the anguish of our fellow-men. And this is mercy. It bends with tender sympathy over the sufferings of man, of every kind and form, and delights to heal the broken heart, and pour the oil of comfort into the bosom of the afflicted and sorrowful. Of this godlike virtue, the poet has said, well and truly,

"It droppeth like the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;
It blesses him that gives, and him that takes.
'T is mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But Mercy is above this sceptred sway,
It is enthronéd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When Mercy seasons Justice."

For the exercise of this virtue, there is ample opportunity on earth, because its objects are not merely our friends and acquaintances, but the whole race; and even the animal creation; for,

"the merciful man is merciful to his beast." Wherever there is a living thing enduring suffering or pain, there is an opportunity for an exercise of mercy; and the truly merciful man will pity, even though he cannot relieve. Upon such a man, the blessing of the Saviour was pronounced; and it is obvious, that the exercise of such a virtue, the possession of a spirit so nearly allied to God, is, in itself, a great and valuable blessing. But the benediction of the text extends further than this; and makes the merciful man peculiarly blessed, from the fact, that he shall obtain mercy, in his turn. This is no small matter. Erring, sinful, ungrateful and wandering creatures, as we are, we do, all of us, every day of our lives, need much of the clemency and mercy of God. And surrounded, as we are, with disease, and misfortunes, and afflictions, which no human wisdom can prevent, and beset with temptations and infirmities on every side, no man may hope to pass through life, without having need of mercy from his fellow-men.

The principle of the text is, that those who show mercy shall find it. Whether it was the

intention of Christ to say, that the merciful shall obtain mercy from God, or man, or both, I will not pretend to decide. In either of these senses, the text is undoubtedly true; and I shall do no violence to its spirit, by considering it in both these aspects.

I. The merciful shall obtain mercy from man.

There are, of course, exceptions to this, as there are to all general rules; yet, the rule itself is based upon that universal law, in virtue of which, "like begets like." Every spirit that man manifests, or exercises, towards his fellow-men, is calculated, in its influences, to produce a similar spirit on their part. The illustrations of this rule are as numerous as the human passions, and various as the circumstances, that call those passions into action.

Go to your fellow-man in the spirit of wrath. Assail him with angry words, and opprobrious epithets, and there is scarcely anything more certain, than that, by persisting in this course, you will soon see the same fire kindling in his heart, that is burning with vehement heat in yours. An answering chord will be touched, and he will

soon be angry, as you are angry. But meet him, even though he is bursting with rage, in the spirit of meekness and love, with calm words of kindness and good-will, and you shall soon see his anger cooling; and, if you falter not, but a short time will pass, ere his heart will become soft; — the raging tumult of passion shall pass away, and leave him calm as a summer morning. So true it is, that "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

Again, go to one of your brethren, who is in distress, either of body or of mind, in the spirit of the Master. Sympathize with his sufferings, — speak kind words to him, and they shall fall like the gentle dews of heaven upon his heart. Put forth your hand in the work of mercy, and it shall leave an impression there, that shall never be eradicated. And when you, in your turn, fall into misfortune or suffering, and call upon that man for mercy, he will be near you, and will give back that mercy which he received, in good measure, "pressed down and running over." No matter what the occasion may be, that first called for an exercise of mercy, on your part. It may

be sickness, it may be misfortune, or it may be crime; and, in either case, the result shall be the same. Indeed, it often happens, that the man of guilt and blood, who has been buffeted by the cold world, and who has braved the fiercest storms of its wrath, is most sensitive to the impressions of mercy, and most sure to show mercy in return.

Go you, to the felon in the cell, incarcerated there, for crimes that manifested an utter destitution of all the nobler and better feelings of the human heart. Go in the spirit of the Saviour. Speak to him words of kindness and compassion. Smite upon that hard heart, with deeds dictated by Heaven's mercy, and it shall melt like wax, in the rays of the sun. No man shall grasp your hand in a warmer or firmer embrace, than that hardened criminal, whom the world had given up as lost, and in whom it had seen only, one to be crushed and blotted out, as a foul stain upon the face of God's creation. And if he lives, and you live, and fall upon evil times, or are overwhelmed in sorrow, or misfortune, count on him as your friend. On earth, there shall not be a heart, that

will commiserate more truly, or a man that shall do, or dare more, to serve you, than that lost one, whom you have saved by your mercy. It may be, that these outcasts, as they are considered, are all unused to the voice of mercy, so that, when it comes, it strikes upon the heart with a new and strange power, which overwhelms them. And this may be the reason, why they are frequently even more sensitive, and more certain to return mercy for mercy, than those who have often felt its genial influence.

But whatever may be the reason, of the fact there is no doubt, that the abandoned often yield an implicit obedience to the law of our being, which renders mercy for mercy, and, in many cases, that obedience is most cheerfully and efficiently rendered.

The American Indians are, perhaps, the best specimen of human nature left to its own workings, that can be found; and it is remarkable, with what strictness they yield their obedience to the principle now under consideration. If they return evil for evil, cruelty for cruelty, and blood for blood, it is not less true, that, as a general rule,

they return kindness for kindness, and mercy for mercy. Many instances of this kind have been evolved, in the intercourse of the whites with that remarkable people.

I select one only, and that, not because it is most striking or important, but because, to my knowledge, it has never been written. I had it from the mouth of one of the parties concerned, and deem it worthy of being repeated.

In the State of Alabama, and not far from the junction of the waters of the Coosa and Tallapoosa, there is a plantation, on which resides an aged widow, of some means, of much respectability, well-known benevolence, and no ordinary intelligence. There, she and her husband settled, many years ago, and while the surrounding country was inhabited by Indians.

An elder son was, for a time, an agent of the government, and dwelt at an Indian settlement not far distant. He was characterized not less for his clemency and mercy, than for his justice; and not unfrequently interposed, to save the Indians from the cupidity and rapacity of the traders, who came among them.

It frequently happened that the mother visited her son, and dwelt for a season among these children of the forest. At such times, she was busy with the sick, and such as were in distress, ministering to their wants, and doing what she could, to relieve their sufferings.

It was during that war, which is familiarly known, in that quarter, under the name of "General Jackson's war," that the Indians formed the design of surprising, and putting to death, the whole settlement, where my friend resided. The plan was discovered, and all was, of course, excitement and alarm.

Every night the dread onset was expected, and all possible means were taken to secure safety. "But," said my aged friend, "I was not afraid. For me and mine, we had done good to the Indians, and I did not believe, that they would harm us." And the fact, as afterwards revealed, proved that her confidence was well founded. The plan was frustrated, by being discovered, or by the proximity of the army. "But," said an Indian, in after time, to this aged friend, "were you afraid?" "No," was the reply, "I was not

afraid." "No need," said he. "Your house was marked, and no Indian would hurt you."

Goaded to madness, these children of nature could plan the destruction of a settlement; but, in the midst of all this wrath, they could remember mercy for mercy; and had they carried out their fell design, the hatchet might have been red with blood, and the bow of the warrior hurled the messenger of death, with fatal aim, to many a warm beating heart; but, clad in the panoply of deeds of mercy, that unarmed woman, and her helpless children, might have stood in the midst of carnage and death, and no hair upon the head of her, or hers, should have perished.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Yes, they shall obtain it, at the hands of their fellow-men; and even the poor Indian, in whose untutored soul, a weak faith can detect no ray of compassion, shall yield obedience to that law of human being, which renders mercy for mercy; nor can revenge, or war, blot that law even from the savage heart.

It is not pretended, of course, that there are no instances in which a man of mercy has, in his

hour of peril, or danger, or distress, failed to receive that mercy, from the hand of his fellow-man, for which he has plead most earnestly. But, as a general rule, and as a fixed principle of the Divine government, it is true, beyond all question, that men are far more ready and willing, to extend mercy to the merciful, than to those who are devoid of that virtue. And this principle extends, not only to men's deeds, but also to their opinions and words.

A harsh or an uncharitable judgment will hardly be rendered, by public opinion, against a man, who is known for his kind and merciful heart. Even his offences will be palliated, and his faults will be mentioned with kindness, and commiseration; and if he falls, at last, into guilt, justice, in his case, will be tempered with mercy; and if the stern mandate of the law declares, that he must suffer its penalty, mercy will linger in the hearts of the people, and they will pity, and weep, in the tenderness of their hearts, over the sufferings, that they cannot relieve. So true it is, that, there is a blessing for the merciful, in

the fact, that they shall obtain mercy from their fellow-men.

II. The merciful shall obtain mercy from God.

God, indeed, governs all things; and a strong and confiding faith will recognize the ordinary manifestations of mercy, from man to man, as coming from God, and as the testimonies of his most abundant mercy. It was an act of mercy in God, which so made the human heart, that it yearns with peculiar tenderness towards the merciful, and thus rendered it possible for any man to secure the kind consideration of his fellow-men, upon the easy condition, that he shall himself be merciful. And thus it is, that every throb of commiseration for the woes of others, which beats in the human heart, becomes the transcript of the Divine mercy, and the medium through which he manifests the darling attribute, to his children on earth. Mercy has not its original source in human nature. It was planted there by the all-merciful Creator. Its fountain is in God, and its highest perfection, in the soul of man, is but a drop from an exhaustless ocean, a small scintilla-

tion from the eternal rock. And thus does it appear, that all mercy is of God; and though it is obtained of man, yet it is from above, and man is but the medium through which it is communicated.

Nevertheless, there is a distinction proper to be made, between that mercy, which comes to us through the agency or instrumentality of our fellow-men, and that, which is manifested directly from God, to the human soul. It is true, beyond doubt, that God is all-merciful — that all men are the constant recipients of his mercy, and that even the best of men have need of it, and experience it richly, every day of their lives. And it is true, also, that God has concluded the world in unbelief, "that he might have mercy upon all." Still, there are peculiar manifestations of the Divine mercy, which can only be obtained by the merciful.

In the first place, the merciful man is the only one, who is likely to recognize, or feel, a sense of the Divine mercy. Take the hard-hearted, the misanthropic, or the cruel man, who never felt a warm and genial glow of pity, or compassion, for

the sufferings, or the sorrows, of his fellows, and whose ear has ever been deaf to the cries of those who had no helper. Let that man witness the displays of mercy, in his fellow-man. Let him see the forgiveness of the penitent, or the compassion of a Howard exercised towards those that are in prison or bonds; and he cannot comprehend it. He will attribute it to weakness, or cowardice, or perhaps to a sympathy with the crimes, or follies, of the erring, or offending. And if it is exercised towards himself, he will be ready to suspect, that it comes from vanity, or interest, or some sinister motive.

And so of the Divine mercy. It may flow in streams all around him, and he will take it as a matter of course, nor dream that it comes from the mercy of God. How can he? Mercy is a principle which is an utter stranger to his heart.

But the merciful man recognizes mercy wherever he sees it, as the friend of his heart. If it comes from man, he feels and appreciates it, and is doubly blessed, because he knows, that he also is blessed from whom it proceeds. If it comes from God, he sees it as the attribute Divine, and

enjoys it the more richly, because he knows, it is full and free. He is like the man whose eyes are open to behold the light, and all the beauties of nature, and whose ear is tuned in harmony with the songs, that burst from creation around him. But the other is like the blind man, who walks in darkness, while the light is shining in full splendor on his path. Or, like the deaf man, in whose soul there is no music, and who sits in solitude and silence, while ten thousand tongues are vocal with joy, on every side.

So, then, it is manifest, that one of the conditions on which man is to receive the Divine mercy, and enjoy it as such, is, that he shall himself be merciful, and thus prepare his soul for the reception of the heavenly guest.

And then, again, mercy, in the human heart, so elevates man, assimilates him to the Divine nature, that he comes to a sacred nearness with God, and so walks with him, that there is but a step between him and the Divinity; and the mercy of heaven is always at hand. Let him fall into suffering, or trouble, the merciful deeds he has done will bend, like smiling angels, over

him; the mercy of his own soul will bring him up so near to his God, that the Divine principle will come to him, as it were, fresh from the eternal fountain, and fill him with comfort and peace. It is not, therefore, an arbitrary arrangement, by which God communicates his peculiar mercies to the merciful. But it is, on the contrary, in accordance with that eternal fitness of things, which requires, that the soul of man must be prepared, ere it can be a tabernacle of God, or receive spiritual gifts from on high. Pray ye, then, that God will prepare your hearts, by an exercise of mercy, to realize the truth of that word, which saith, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

SERMON VI.

PURITY OF HEART.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
MATT. 5: 8.

THE text naturally suggests to the mind, an important distinction between the Gospel of Christ and other systems, in the fact, that *it* has mainly to do with the hearts of men, while *they* direct their efforts mostly to the regulation of the hands. They are satisfied when man yields an outward obedience to their commands; but Christianity is never satisfied, until the heart is purified, so that it can yield the obedience of love. Others could give directions for the government of the outward conduct; but it was the aim of Jesus to touch the heart, and bring it into subjection to the law of Divine love. It is, probably, for this reason, that the specific moral precepts of the Gospel are even less full and explicit, than those of some of the ancients; and its code consists rather of great first principles, than minute and particular details.

Christ saw that the source of human actions was deeper than his predecessors had imagined. The experience of ages had demonstrated the fact, that no mere arbitrary laws could control human action, or guide it in the path of duty, so long as the hearts of the children of men were fully set in them to do evil. Hence, he inculcated purity of heart, as the great boon to be sought, with all earnestness, and the only effectual remedy for sin, and safeguard of virtue. He sought to infuse into the soul those Divine truths, which should so exalt and purify the nature, that each individual man should become a law unto himself, and voluntarily walk in the way of truth and duty.

To hedge men around with laws, while they were bent on mischief, and while all was corrupt within, was, in his view, but to chain the furious maniac, and leave him a maniac still, to sunder his chains, and break out in acts of violence.

Better, by far, to speak the word, that had power to cast out the evil spirit, and restore the madman to his right mind, and then leave him to follow the promptings of the better spirit.

One holy principle of Heaven's truth — one pure and godlike feeling, breathed upon the soul, and diffused through the heart of universal humanity — is more efficacious for good, than all the abstract laws, for the regulation of human hands and bodies, that were ever invented.

I hold it, therefore, as the glory of Christ, that, instead of tampering with the *external*, he appealed to the *internal* man, and labored so to breathe into the soul the breath Divine, that it might live the life of God, and spontaneously bring forth the abundant fruits of righteousness.

The benediction of the text is pronounced upon "the pure in heart," and their blessedness consists in the fact, that they shall see God. In pursuing the subject here presented, it will be proper to consider —

I. The characters upon which the blessing is pronounced.

These are "the pure in heart." It is not presumable, that we are to understand, by purity of heart, a destitution of the passions, or propensities, common to human nature; for this would make the perfect stoic, cold as marble, and incapable of

an act, that should rise above the workings of an inanimate machine. God has made us, and endued us with all the passions we possess; and they are all proper, and necessary to our well-being. The difficulty is in the excess, or the wrong action, of the passions, and not in their harmonious development, or proper exercise. They are blind, and, if left uncontrolled, will certainly run into excess and evil. For this cause, God has exalted us above the brutes, by giving us an intellectual and moral nature; and these should direct, and guide, and regulate the passions, and bring them into subjection to the law of love, which is but an emanation from God himself — the test and standard of all purity and goodness.

This great law of Divine love, in which all other laws are fulfilled, and which is the sum and substance of all the law and the prophets, should be the supreme rule — the great governing principle of the mind — hallowing every thought, and giving tone and direction to every act. In Christ, "a new commandment" is given, that "we should love one another;" and strict

conformity to this great law, is the highest point of human purity. Let but this love be in us, and abound, and we shall be numbered among the pure in heart. Not, that we shall be stripped entirely of the common and universal attributes of humanity; but, love and kindness shall so pervade and sanctify the soul, that every passion shall be tuned to harmony, and brought to the obedience of Christ.

Purity of heart consists, not in a stoical apathy, or morbid insensibility, which enables a man to walk among his fellows like a marble statue, which, though beautiful and white, is cold and dead. The pure heart is warm, and alive to all the best and tenderest sensibilities of nature. Men may lift themselves, as they think, above the world, stand aloof from their race, and have no communion with its evil doings; but there is no evidence of real purity, in such a course. That blessed boon is not to be sought in the cell of the monk, or the cloister of the recluse, but in the busy world, where man was made to dwell, and to act. And it is not confined to the votaries of any creed, or to the professors of any sect. The

Samaritan, who bound up the wounds of the traveller by the wayside, though despised by the world, and held by the Jews as an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel," and an outcast from the favor of God, was, nevertheless, far more worthy to be ranked among the pure in heart, than the austere and sanctimonious Priest and Levite, who, with all their professions of faith, and zeal for God, could pass by a wounded and dying brother, and leave him to perish in his gore.

And so, the kind and the true in every age, — the men who have loved their fellows, and toiled earnestly and sincerely for human good, — whatever may have been their names or creeds, are among the pure in heart; and upon them has rested the blessing of the text. They have seen God, and walked with him, from day to day, as Enoch of old.

To attain this purity, it is indeed important, that we understand the great and leading truths of the Gospel, which reveal to man his nature, his relations to God and his fellows, his duty and his destiny; because these will work like leaven in the heart, and purify the whole lump. He

who looks upon God as his Father, and upon man as his brother, and upon a pure and blessed heaven as his final home, will naturally imbibe the sentiment of love to God, and good-will to man, and grow continually more pure, as he cherishes these ennobling views. He will habitually look up to God, as his best and most steadfast friend, and conform, more and more, to the Divine image, thus presented, as his ideal of all good. He will look upon the men with whom he associates, as his brethren, and heirs with him to an incorruptible inheritance, and be preparing for a dwelling there. He will watch over his feelings with a tireless and sleepless vigilance, restrain every inordinate emotion, and subdue every boisterous passion. He will bid every pure sentiment a welcome to the inmost sanctuary of his soul. He will cherish all virtuous and pure principles, and permit no hallowed thought to depart from his mind, without leaving its impress there. And thus, he will constantly assimilate to the Divinity, grow in grace, and in all that is good and true, and be prepared to receive the blessing of the text.

Laws and codes of morals cannot give this purity of heart. Even the law of God, as given by Moses, could not insure it; for the apostle says, it "could not make the comers thereunto perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." Nor is this purity to be obtained in a moment, or a day. Men may dream of purifications wrought in an hour, and in the heat of excited passion; but the truth is, changes of this sort generally leave their subjects about as impure as they were before. I do not say, that men, under such circumstances, may not form good resolutions, and determine to commence seeking after purity of heart; though it is to be feared, that the resolution is too often formed, rather from a slavish fear of punishment, or a mercenary hope of reward, than from a just appreciation of the intrinsic excellency of purity itself. However this may be, it is certain, that, purity of heart, like all of our most valued blessings, must result from exercise and toil. It is not a guest, that comes instantly at our bidding; but it must be wooed, in order to be won.

We need not sit down, and wait, with folded arms, in the vain hope, that, without an effort on

our part, there will some day come a supernatural influence, and purify our hearts, in the twinkling of an eye. But we must drink in the holy and life-giving truths of the Gospel. We must subdue one after another of the turbulent passions — in God's strength, pluck up the noxious weeds from the garden of the soul — cherish and nurture all good feelings, and seek after good influences; and thus, by a long, and often a laborious course of culture and discipline, we must become pure in heart. And, in the work itself, we shall be cheered with brighter, and still brighter, visions of the excellent glory, as we advance in purity, until we come with open face to see God. Thus much upon the topic of purity of heart.

II. We come, now, to speak of the blessing pronounced upon the pure in heart.

"They shall see God." We are not, however, to understand, that we shall see him with our natural eyes, or, that we shall see his form; for he hath not body or parts, visible to those organs of sight. He is a spirit; and, if seen at all, it must be with the spiritual eye. We may so live — so elevate and improve our spiritual natures — that

we can commune with him from off the mercy-seat, and be as sensible of his Divine presence, as we are of that of a friend, when we talk with him, face to face. This it is to see God; and this perception of the Deity, as present and near to us, is for the pure in heart alone. For, although it is true, that God is vitally everywhere, and that he is not far from every one of us; yet, it is the peculiar privilege of the pure in heart, to perceive his presence. The impure cannot so much as "feel after him, to find him."

The reason for this will appear obvious, on a moment's reflection. It is no arbitrary arrangement, which locates God in a particular spot, and gives to some the privilege of approaching and looking at him, as they would look at a picture; but it is a principle, that exists in the nature of things. All impurity — everything opposed to the spirit of Divine love — is a veil upon the heart, through which God cannot be seen, though "in him we live, and move, and have our being." That veil must be taken away, ere man can see him, face to face. The reason is, God is pure, and man can form no just or ade-

quate idea of purity, except by comparison with what he finds in himself.

You have doubtless noticed, how readily, and I know not but I might say, unavoidably, you associate with God the feelings that you possess. Whether it be unavoidable, or not, the fact is certain, that all men do form their ideas of God, from the pattern of their own hearts. I do not say, that they never improve upon the pattern, and make gods better than themselves; though it is to be feared, that they more often make them worse. But be that as it may, it is evident, that no man ascribes to God a principle, or a feeling, which does not dwell, in some degree, in his own heart. Were he to do so, in words, they would convey no definite idea to the mind. The soul could not see it, if it were in God. Hence we say, man can perceive, clearly, only so much of God, as he himself partakes of the Divine nature. All else is an unmeaning name, for an unknown thing. Suppose, for example, there was never in the human heart any such sentiment as benevolence. What possible idea could man form of the benevolence or love of God? Evidently,

none. He might talk of it, but it would be a mere name, that would convey no definite idea to the mind — a name for an unknown something, that no man ever felt, or saw, or knew anything about. He might describe it; but that would only give a new name to the same unknown thing. To know what benevolence is — to see it — we must first feel it in our own souls. Then, and not till then, can we understand its import, or detect its presence. Now, God is pure; and when the question is asked, What is purity? — the mind is thrown back upon itself. If it finds purity there, it knows what it means, and can see it in God. But if it finds it not, of what avail is a name applied to a thing, that never entered into the heart of man? We may talk about it; but we know it not.

Take an illustration. Here is a man who was born blind, and whose eyes never saw the light of the sun. What possible idea can he form of light? You may teach him, in words, the philosophy of light, so that he shall be able to explain all its laws, and all its phenomena, as clearly as Newton himself; but, after all, he is

as profoundly ignorant of light, in itself, as the child unborn. He cannot see it. He cannot form the first correct idea of it; for there is no light in him. And so it must be, until his eyes are opened, to behold the light around him.

And so of the deaf man. He may be taught the whole science of music, so that he can explain all its theory. But, when all that is done, what does he know of the sweet harmony of sound? Positively nothing. He has merely learned the names of things, of which he is, and, from the necessity of the case, must be, profoundly ignorant; nor can he know them, until his ears are unstopped, and his soul is delighted with the inflowings of music. Then, and only then, will he know what music is.

Again: The parent only, knows parental love. Others may talk of it, and portray its beauties in glowing colors; or explain it, in the nicest metaphysical terms. But they know it not. Go and ask the mother, as she gazes, for the first time, upon the child of her love, and feels that the precious treasure is all her own; and she will tell you, that fountains have been opened in her

heart, which were sealed before, and feelings have grown up there, which were all unknown. She has talked of a mother's love; she has read, and sung of its purity, and depth; but now she *knows*, for the first time, what it is to love as a mother loves.

So it is, in the case before us. God is pure, and the impure in heart cannot know him. Reason as they will, theorize as they may, there is, nevertheless, a veil upon their hearts, and they must be as ignorant of God, as the blind man of colors, until that veil is removed.

But the pure in heart can see God. They have been made partakers of the Divine nature; and, forming their ideal of God from the purity of their own hearts, the more pure they become, the more near do they approach, and the more clearly can they see God.

To see God, then, is not, merely, to be able to describe his character; but it is to feel communion with his spirit, and partake of his Divine nature. Hence, the apostle says, "He that loveth, knoweth God; and he that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love." And again: "He that loveth, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Thus it appears, that there is a true philosophy in the text, which declares, that, "the pure in heart shall see God;" for they only can see him. The man, who never felt aught, but hurtful passions, knows not the meaning of that word, love. He, who has no purity in his own soul, comprehends not the meaning of the word: you may portray, before him, the character of a pure and holy God, and he may gaze and wonder, but it must fall upon his ear like the soft strains of music upon the ears of the deaf, or like the morning's mellow rays upon the sightless eyeballs of the blind.

No matter what a man's professions may be, or how orthodox the creed to which he has subscribed — except he be pure in heart, he cannot see God; for he is seen, not through creeds, but through the heart. He may have a creed as long as the Koran, and expound its mysteries with the power of a son of thunder — he may pray like a saint, and preach like an apostle — he may be converted, and get religion after the most approved fashion; but if his heart be not pure — if he does not feel like a child, and love

like a brother — the veil is upon his vision, and he cannot see God. Wise though he may be, yet, the most unlettered man, whose heart is right, can teach him the first rudiments of the knowledge of God.

III. Let it be observed, that seeing God is represented as a precious privilege.

"Blessed," or, rather, "happy, are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Would we realize the value of this blessing, let us reflect for a moment. Who, that has heard of the great and the good of earth, does not desire to see them? We have heard of Washington, the father of his country. Who would not deem it a blessed privilege, to see the man who was "first in the hearts of his countrymen?" Who would not gaze with delight upon that manly form, or listen to that voice, which commanded armies, or take hold of that hand, which bore the sword, right manfully, for the liberty of man?

I remember, too, his companion in arms, the good and the generous La Fayette, who left the blandishments of a court, and the home of his youth, and came to this wilderness, that he

might make bare his arm, in the cause of human rights. I remember, too, after long years of absence, some of them in prisons and dungeons, he came again, to visit the field of his youthful labors; and how did our vast population rush with one accord to see him! How eagerly did endless throngs crowd around him; and how happy did they feel, when they caught a glimpse of that aged frame, and benignant countenance, and knew it was indeed the man, who shed his blood for that blessed country they call their own!

So of the wise and good, who have gone before us. We would gladly see Abraham, as he pitched his tent of old; or Moses, as he came down from the mount; or David, as he sat upon the throne of Israel. How happy should we be to see Peter, as he was, upon the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were smitten by his words! Or Paul, as he was, when he stood before Agrippa, and plead the cause of the Master with such power, that the stern ruler cried out, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!"

O, how blessed should we deem ourselves, to

stand in the midst of Jerusalem, and look upon Jesus, the beloved of God, as he moved, with words of love, and deeds of mercy, among the people!

So strong is this feeling, that an ardent desire is kindled to see the places where these worthies lived, and by it they become consecrated. What multitudes have gone to the Holy Land, that they might gaze upon the scenery made sacred by these hallowed memories of the past! How has the heart leaped for joy, as the eyes have rested upon the tall cedars of Lebanon, the rocks of Horeb, or the still more dear and beloved mount, where the Saviour sat, as he uttered the blessed words of our text, and gave the benedictions with which it is connected! And then, could the scene be filled up, and the Saviour, and the disciples, be there, how many souls would be willing to say, as they gazed, "Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." But these scenes, not many of us may be permitted to behold. And for those who labored there, they have gone from earth, and we cannot see them.

But we may, any of us, see God, who is greater and better than all; and see him, too, every day of our lives. We have only to be pure in heart, and we shall see him; and, in the strength of that purity, we can lift the veil, that hides the holy of holies, and look with unclouded vision upon the Shekinah which dwelleth within.

How blessed the privilege, thus vouchsafed to the frail and erring children of men! Let us seek it diligently, as the pearl of great price, and feel, that a blessed boon is given us, in the fact, that, even while we tabernacle in the flesh, we may be permitted to see the Invisible and Eternal.

It is a blessed thought, too, that the impure principles of our nature are not immortal, but are destined to die, and live no more. The Gospel has gone forth as a refiner's fire, and a fuller's soap. Jesus has kindled a fire, that shall not be quenched until it has consumed the hay, wood, and stubble, and a redeemed and purified world shall bend before the excellent glory, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, who was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty!

SERMON VII.

THE PEACE-MAKERS.

Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. MATT. 5: 9.

CHRISTIANITY is essentially a religion of peace. It comes to man, not with "banner, spear, and plume," but, with the olive-branch, the emblem of peace and good-will. It seeks to conquer, not by the sword, or the javelin, but by the mild and gentle influences of Divine love. In this light, the Messiah's kingdom was viewed, prospectively, by the ancient prophets; and they seem to have turned, with peculiar delight, from the noise and din of war, which surrounded them, to contemplate that distant era, when, under the reign of Israel's Hope and Consolation, the trumpet should no more summon the armed hosts to fields of carnage and blood. Thus, Isaiah, in the spirit of prophetic vision, looked forward, and saw the day of the Lord, and said, "His name shall be called

Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end." "Behold, saith the Lord, I will extend peace like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

These lessons from the olden days were not lost upon those who "waited for the consolation of Israel," at the time of the advent of our Saviour. Aged Simeon and Zecharias had caught their spirit, and saw, in the stranger of Bethlehem, "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel" — a messenger sent from God, "to show light to them that sat in darkness, and to guide their feet in the way of peace."

The angels brought "good tidings of great joy, which should be unto all people," and the multitude of the heavenly host shouted, "Glory to

God in the highest; on earth peace, good-will to men."

The expectations thus raised, of the peaceful character of the approaching messenger of God, were fully realized in the event. The people of his native city "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth;" and when he sent out his disciples to preach, he said: "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves;" and he strictly charged them, saying, "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house." And so, when he had preached peace to the world, and illustrated his precepts by an example of meekness and love, which rendered not "evil for evil, or railing for railing;" he went his way, leaving his parting benediction in these blessed words, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you."

I have alluded to these Scriptures and facts, for the purpose of showing you, that this great feature of the Gospel stands out in bold relief, from whatever point of observation it is viewed. It appears, in the prophecy, in the expectation, in

the announcement, in the teachings, in the life, and in the departure, of Christ; thus presenting a unity and harmony, between the different scenes in this great drama, which can hardly be presumed to consist, with anything else, but truth of Divine origin.

In this light, also, it will be seen, how appropriately the words of our text came from him of Nazareth, and how perfectly in keeping they are, with the character of one, who came as "The Prince of Peace."

Of all beings that ever lived on earth, Jesus is the only one, that might say, in perfect consistency with all that had been said of him, and all that he had taught, and all that he was, "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." They are words that could come, without self-reproach, from him, and him alone.

I prefer, in a discussion of this text, to view it rather as a prophecy, than a declaration of what then was, so far as the peculiar blessing it pronounces is concerned.

It is true, that the peace-maker is always

blessed, in the calm consciousness of being engaged in the cause of righteousness, justice, and mercy. He is blessed, in view of the terrible evils he averts, and of the vast good he secures, to his fellow-men; and, more than all, in the knowledge, that he has the approbation of his own conscience, and of his God. The blessings of peace, which are neither few nor small, come to him with a holier and sweeter influence, because he feels, that they are, in some measure, the fruit of his own toil — the reward which God bestows upon his labors of love.

Consider for a moment the evils, that flow from a spirit of strife and contention. Begin with the family circle, which ought to be the nearest approximation to the harmony of heaven, that earth affords. It is a blessed place, when peace dwells there. Parents and children, brothers and sisters, live in the interchange of mutual confidence and love, and in the exercise of all those tender and holy feelings and duties, which so exalt and ennoble human nature, and serve to ally us, while here below, to a higher and better sphere. But let strife and contention begin, and

the streams of bliss are poisoned at the fountain. The holy sanctuary of domestic affection becomes a theatre of malignant war, a place for the display of every angry passion; and home is a hell in very deed, than which, a deeper or hotter burns not, in this world of sin and sorrow. There is a blessing for that man, who calms these turbulent elements — lights again the sacred fire upon the domestic altar, and introduces concord and harmony, where all was discord and confusion; and from homes thus redeemed from the hands of the spoiler, there goes up many a prayer, for Heaven's benediction upon the head of him, by whom the storm has been laid.

Extend your view; and, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," upon a larger scale. Happy is that neighborhood, or city, whose inhabitants live in peace, with one another. The social circle is harmonious and joyful, and there flows, from heart to heart, a genial spirit, which makes even the most inhospitable climate pleasant and agreeable. A holy and peaceful calm settles down upon such a community. The very air

seems more genial, the skies more bright, and the earth more green and beautiful. But let strife begin, and how soon is all the scene changed! Envy, malice, and revenge, commence their dreadful work. Angry words, and malignant actions, abound. Friend passes friend with averted countenance, and all the charities and civilities of life are lost, in the general uproar of confusion; and that quiet and blissful scene is changed to a Babel of miserable war and fighting. Surely, there is a blessing, for that man, who hushes these angry passions, and restores peace to these troubled waters.

When the excitement of passion is over, and men see the folly that has passed, and enjoy the blessedness of peace restored, they will call him a child of God indeed, by whom this deliverance was wrought.

Extend your view, still further; and the principle is the same. Here is a great nation, blessed of God, in some important respects, above all the nations of the earth. It is at peace with the world. How rapid is its onward march! How do the arts and sciences flourish, and every

improvement of mind and manners abound! And how does it soar upward, upon unfaltering pinions, towards a destiny higher, and more glorious, than has ever been achieved by any nation of the earth! But let war begin, either within, or without. Let the people of this nation be divided, and contending among themselves — the north at variance with the south, and the south striving against the north; — let this continue, and ere long, the stars shall fade from the escutcheon of our country's glory, and all our free and cherished institutions shall be changed to curses, instead of blessings. With sorrow be it said, we are treading upon the fearful verge of this precipice; and while, as a great people, we ought to dwell in harmony, and labor for the redemption of a world, we are engaged in angry altercations, and hot strife, with the members of our own household. I say not, with the fallen angel of the poet's brain, "My voice is still for war;" but, feeble as it may be, it is for peace. And if there is, in this mighty republic, a man, a statesman, or an orator, who has power to control the elements of strife, and quell this angry storm, let him gird

himself to the work. Let his calm voice be heard, in our halls of legislation, above the fury of the tempest, and the angry tones of aspiring demagogues, pleading for the things that make for peace; and, if he shall be successful in hushing the tumult, and in restoring harmony to this great and blessed family, as God is true, he shall win for himself, a blessing and a name, that mortal man has rarely won. For it was, and is, and ever shall be true, that the peace-maker is blessed above the ordinary measure of men.

Or, look again, and see a mighty nation lifting the ponderous sword, for war with other nations. What dire calamity on earth can equal this? What an expenditure of toil and treasure! What awful scenes of strife! What fields, strewed with the wounded and slain, and groaning under the burden of their dead! What ghastly wounds, and disfigured and mutilated bodies of our fellow-men! What hardening of the human heart, and obliterating the image of God from the human soul! What fathers, husbands, and brothers dead; mothers, wives, and sisters deserted and comfortless! What widows, weeping

in the loneliness of untimely bereavement, and orphans, bewailing in helpless sorrow, the loved and the lost! What an awful amount of sin, deep and damning before God, crying for vengeance! What tears falling, blood streaming, and hearts breaking, crowd into the dismal picture, of nations at war! O! if ever man serves God, it is in preventing these sore and dreadful evils! And if there is an employment, worthy of the highest angel, or one that exalts man to the dignity of a child of the God of love, it is that of the peace-maker. And if there is a man, blessed above all others, in the consciousness of duty done, and of the approbation of God himself, it is the man, who has stood as a minister of peace and good-will, and rolled back the tide of strife and war.

Thus much is, and ever has been, true of the peace-maker; and of these blessings he cannot be robbed.

It is also true, that the peculiar blessing of the text has come upon his head, in some good degree. A grateful people, relieved from the burdens and horrors of war, have often blessed

him; and the wise and the good have hailed him, as a child of God.

But not, as yet, has the united voice of the world, or the common sentiment of the race, called the peace-makers the children of God. And therefore it is, that I would consider this part of the text, rather as a prophecy, of what shall be, than a declaration of what now is, or has been the fact.

I would look upon it as an indication, that there is a time coming, when the spirit of the Gospel shall so pervade and sanctify the human heart, that man shall look upon war, as it really is, a system of legalized murder, and wholesale butchery, repugnant alike to the laws of God, and the good of man; and shall regard the peace-makers as the greatest benefactors of their race, and call them the children of God.

It requires but a slight acquaintance with the world, to know that, thus far, its history is a record of war and strife; and, while the road to honor and renown has been through fields of battle, and scenes of blood, those who have labored for peace have been rejected, and often despised,

by the world. It is a melancholy truth, thus far, in the history of the world, that those names which are remembered, and emblazoned upon the historic page, as exalted above the ordinary masses of men, are the names of those, who have been conspicuous in war.

In early times, it was not the peace-maker, but the warrior, who was called a child of God. Nay, worse, he was deified and worshipped as a god. A large number of the gods, that claimed the adoration of the ancients, were but the heroes of battles, who fought valiantly, when alive; and who, after death, were deified, and made the objects of worship, as being exalted to a rank among the gods. And so, for ages, among the civilized and enlightened nations, even those who have professed the Christian religion, the cherished idols of the people have been men of war; and to those, who have wielded the sword most successfully, has been given the highest meed of praise, as well as the loftiest and most commanding position, among the great of the earth.

Until this day, much of this spirit remains; and the people are ready to crown with laurels, and

greet with the highest honors, those who have been men of war, from their youth. Military glory eclipses and outshines services rendered by those who toil in the paths of peace; and those who are exalted to the highest stations, are the heroes of many battles.

That our own country is not exempt from this feeling, is evident from the fact, that, four times within the last quarter of a century, has military glory proved an overmatch for civil services, in asserting, before our people, its claim to the highest post of honor in their gift. I suppose it is no political heresy, in the eyes of either party, to say, that Jackson, twice, and Harrison and Taylor, each once, have been elevated, by the free suffrages of the people, to the Presidency of these United States, by the prestige of their military fame; and that, but for the scenes of death enacted at New Orleans, Tippecanoe, Monterey, and Buena Vista, there is not much probability, that either of them would have filled that honorable station.

Of the men, *as men*, or as politicians, I have nothing to say, except, that they were all, no

doubt, true friends of their country, and lovers of her institutions. They were not, like many of the ancient heroes, petty chieftains, or absolute monarchs, who got up wars on their own account, and for their own emolument or amusement; nor is the sin of war chargeable upon them, more than upon other citizens.

They were but a part of the great body, that engaged in the war. The soul, which moved that gigantic body, and upon which rests the guilt, is in the people. As, in the case of capital punishment, the executor of the law is but a part of the machinery, by which the will of the people is carried out, and you may as well charge the guilt of blood upon the gibbet, as the hangman; so, in this case, the warrior is but the executor of the nation's will; and it is unjust to make him the scape-goat, to bear the whole burden of the sin, of which the people are guilty.

Neither have I a word to say against the politics, or the measures, of these men. The pulpit may as well pass these matters in silence, and leave them to politicians and the press. But the pulpit has something to do, and it is bound to

speak, in reference to that awfully perverted moral sense, which, originating in ages of violence and blood, has flowed down to the present; and, in this land of Gospel light, has so vitiated the spiritual perceptions of twenty millions of people, that their eyes are dazzled, and their hearts captivated, with glory won in the tented field, where every precept and principle of the Gospel of peace is most ruthlessly trampled under foot. Not, that these men have been elevated; that is a small matter. For aught I know, they have performed their duties, as well as any other men could have performed them. But the general prevalence, among the people, of a spirit, which thus elevates and worships martial prowess, — th solemn and lamentable truth, which is here manifested, that a Christian people have learned so little of the spirit of the "Prince of Peace," that they are yet ready to "crook the pregnant hinges of the knee," and bow with humblest devotion at the shrine of the Juggernaut of war, — this is what the pulpit may well reprove; and this is the only truth, I wish to bring out, by the allusions here made. I desired to fix your atten-

tion upon this one fact, so obviously manifested, that exaltation and honor are, yet, most readily accorded to those, who engage in the toil and carnage of war. Glory, thus won, captivates the public mind, and so dazzles the eyes of the people, that, if they do not make gods of their heroes, they do, nevertheless, elevate them, as near as their power will permit, to the dignity of sons of God.

Hence the conclusion, that the day of the dominion of the Prince of Peace, when the peace-makers shall, by the unanimous voice of the world, be called children of God, has not yet arrived. The Gospel has not so subdued the turbulent passions, or curbed the ambition of man, vaulting ever to the skies, that he is willing to give to toil, in the cause of peace and good-will, its true position, in the scale of honor, or accord to the peace-maker the dignity, that belongs to the children of God.

But I take the text to be an intimation, that such a time will surely come. "Of the increase of the government and peace" of the Saviour, "there shall be no end." His Gospel shall go

onward, and still onward, exerting its refining and purifying influence upon the human heart, until war, in all its forms, shall be detested, as a body of sin and death, which has hung like a mill-stone about the neck of poor humanity, and crippled its energies, and destroyed its power for good — a huge monster, which has devoured the substance of man, and given him nothing, in return, but misery and death.

Then, shall the royal law of love be acknowledged, as the first and highest of all laws; and obedience to that, shall be considered as the purest obedience man can render unto God. Then, shall men "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall no more lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;" and then shall it be seen, that, to promote peace on earth, and good-will to men, is the most godlike employment of man upon the earth. Then, too, will men look back upon the most polished warfare, as *we* look upon the contentions of savage hordes, or the trained gladiators, who marred God's image for the amusement of a blood-greedy multitude;

and they will bless the memory of the martyrs of peace, and call them children of God, because in them they will see the Divine image reflected, and the Divine work going on, as it is not seen, in the mass of mankind.

Let the Christian, then, learn "to seek peace, and pursue it." Let him remember the position with which we started, and which it has been our object to illustrate and enforce — that Christianity is essentially a religion of peace. Let his conversation be as "becometh the Gospel of peace;" and thus, will he secure to his own soul, the benediction of the Saviour, which saith, "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God."

SERMON VIII.

THE EFFECTS OF PERSECUTION.

Blessed are they, which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

MATT. 5: 10, 11.

THE last clause of this text, is but a specific application, to the disciples, of a general principle, indicated in the first. The general rule is, that there is a blessing for those, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; and, in accordance with that rule, the disciples were to consider themselves blessed, when persecution assailed them, in the form of revilings, and all manner of false accusations against them, on account of their attachment to the name, and the cause, of Christ. It is to be observed, that persecution is not, of itself, a blessing; nor are revilings and accusations desirable, in themselves considered. The former proves a blessing, only, when it is endured for righteousness' sake; and the latter are profitable, only, when they are false.

It is not for a man to court opposition, and tempt his adversaries to violence, for the sake of securing sympathy, under the plea of persecution; because this is suffering for unrighteousness, and brings no blessing to the soul. Hence, an apostle says, "For what glory is it, if when ye suffer for your faults, ye take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." The blessing of the text is not pronounced upon those who suffer, for their faults, but upon those who steadfastly adhere to righteousness, and are persecuted on that account. And so, in what follows, the word *falsely* is very important and emphatic. There is no blessing in having evil things said of us, if they are true; nor is there pleasure or profit, in being reviled, if we deserve it. But if evil things are said of us, falsely, *then* the consciousness of innocence will sustain us, and the accusation itself may prove a blessing to us, in the form of a trial of our faith and patience. I dwell not, however, upon these particulars; for the distinctions

already made, are sufficiently obvious, to be remembered.

The general topic, to which it is the object of the present discourse to direct attention, is, the blessedness of suffering in the cause of truth and duty.

Infinite wisdom has seen fit so to order his government, that the world will "love its own," and hate that which is opposed to its principles and practices; and the result is expressed in the irreversible law of Divine Providence, that, while the world remains, as it ever has been, "they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." But in this, as in all other cases, God overrules the evil for good, and makes the persecution itself, to subserve the best interests of those, that are exercised thereby. *How* it is so overruled, and *what* are the blessings, which thus accrue to the righteous soul, are matters for our present investigation.

Let it be observed, in the outset, that, in the economy of God, all human excellency, and all of grace or virtue, that man possesses, are the results of labor and discipline. Nothing of true

worth comes to man spontaneously, or unsought. It is so with our physical nature. The body grows to its full vigor, and is developed in full strength, only by exercise and labor. For this reason, the earth is not a blooming garden, where fruits grow spontaneously, and man has nothing to do, but sit down, in listless inactivity, and roll upon couches of ease, or beds of down. Were it so, he would become a puling drone, and all his physical powers would soon deteriorate, waste, and decay. Hence, God has so made the earth, that there are granite rocks, as well as mellow soil, and thorns and thistles, as well as fruits and flowers; and thus, there is a constant and imperious call for that exercise and toil, by which the body is compacted, and all the physical powers are developed.

Precisely so it is with man's moral and spiritual nature. They need, and must have exercise, and labor, in order to develop their powers; and hence, the necessity of the stern conflicts, through which we must pass. Their mission to the soul, is as important as that of physical struggles, to the body. Thus, there is a work for persecu-

tion, and a blessing flowing from it, to those who pass through its fiery ordeal. Under its influence, the virtues of the true followers of Christ are developed, matured, and strengthened — the soul beautifies and grows, in all that is good and great.

Men, in ordinary speech, would hardly call a man a veteran soldier, who had never been tried upon the battle-field. Nor can it be expected, that a man shall be entitled to the appellation of a "good soldier of the Cross," until he has met his enemies, faced the storm, and tried his skill and strength, against the foes of his peace. Shall we descend to a few particulars?

I. Persecution will test the strength, and develop the energies, of faith.

It is an easy thing for a man to adhere to truth, and duty, when it is popular so to do. When friends smile, and the world cheers with its plaudits, and encourages with its rewards, a man of small faith, or no faith at all, may be found on the side of truth, and engaged in works of duty. But it is another matter, when friends entice, and the world frowns. When our fellows

stand ready to revile, and to say all manner of evil; the arm of persecution uplifts the sword to smite us down, and duty is to be done at the sacrifice of all the world calls good and great; then it requires the exercise of a firm and unfaltering faith, to enable a man to do the right, and pursue the true, and leave the consequences with God.

Blessed is that man, who abides the ordeal; for he shall come out of it as gold from the furnace, the stamp of the great assayer upon his soul, and all his virtues shining the brighter, for the trial through which he has passed. Moreover, he will find, that his strength is increased, and that he is, in himself, the stronger, and the better man, for the conflict in which he has engaged. He will meet the next trial with a firmer faith, and a truer heart, and feel less severely the next storm, that may beat upon him.

The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, has drawn out a beautiful statement, of the effects of trials, upon the believing soul, as follows: "We glory in tribulation also, knowing, that tribulation worketh patience, and patience expe-

rience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed."

The train of thought thus suggested is worthy of being pursued; for, it will lead us to a contemplation of the blessedness of those who suffer for righteousness' sake.

II. Tribulation worketh patience.

In a world of alternate sunshine and storm, — a world whose vicissitudes we cannot control, and where the good man must, as the Saviour did, "endure contradiction of sinners," — man has need of a good share of that virtue, which characterized the man of Uz, which bends to the gale, and, in every storm, bows in submission to the Divine will, and calmly waits for a brighter sun and a clearer sky. And this great virtue is best and most thoroughly taught in the school of adversity.

In every department of human life, you may see the truth of the position here assumed. Take the man who has been reduced from affluence to poverty, and, at first, you shall find him restless and impatient, distrustful and unhappy, murmuring and repining at his lot. But as time passes

on, and misfortunes thicken around him, you shall find, that he becomes more patient. Strength of endurance is given him — his soul is armed with fortitude, and he endures without a murmur, and in patient resignation, what would have driven him to distraction, before he had learned patience from the things suffered.

Take, again, the man, who has enjoyed firm and perfect health. Let but a slight disease come upon him, and you will find him impatient and restless, under the sufferings he endures. But, let sickness lay its hand heavily upon him, and confine him, for a long time, to a bed of languishing, and you shall see, that tribulation has wrought its work of patience upon him. Now, you may watch by his bedside, through long and sleepless nights of agony, and find him enduring without a murmur, or a complaint, sufferings which you would not have supposed him capable of enduring, for an hour. While you admire the patient spirit, and muse upon the beauty of such a virtue, it is well to remember, that it has been wrought out in the school of suffering, and that, so only, can a patient spirit be developed.

It is so with the man who suffers persecution. Let there be an evil report, first whispered against him, and you will find him kindling with indignation against the originator of the foul calumny, and burning with impatience to vindicate his name, or his honor, and hurl vengeance upon the head of his accuser. Then let persecution, in a more tangible form, assail him, and you will see him, roused like a lion from his lair. He will roundly assert his rights, and, it may be, defend himself in the same spirit in which he is assailed, and wonder that God permits, and, perhaps, complain that he allows, such violations of all that appears to be just and true. He will rush, with headlong zeal, into the contest, and rest not until the victory is won. But let him alone. "The race is not always with the swift, nor the battle to the strong," is a lesson he has yet to learn. He is in a good school; and he will learn, by and by, that it is best to be patient, and endure what cannot be cured.

Let him still adhere to truth and righteousness. Let men revile him, and say all manner of evil against him. Let the storm of persecu-

tion beat long upon him, and thunder loud around him. Let his name be cast out as evil, and the world frown upon him; and you shall find him calm and steadfast, smiling amid the tempest, hopeful and trustful, in circumstances the most trying to human fortitude. He has learned, that offences must needs come. He has been taught, how frail and erring is man, and can pity and forgive, where he would, but a short time ago, most harshly condemn. He has discovered, that there is a jewel more precious than all, of which the world cannot rob him; and that, not even persecution can take from him that peace of conscience, that "soul's calm sunshine and heartfelt joy," which comes from integrity of heart, and steadfast adherence to that which is good. And thus it is manifest, that tribulation worketh patience. Thus, also, does it appear, that they are blessed who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, from the fact, that they are thus enabled, in patience, to possess their souls, and calmly to lean upon God for protection and support, and wait for his deliverance to come.

III. Patience worketh experience.

It has been well said, that "experience is the best schoolmaster." But the lessons of this great teacher are not taught in a day, or an hour; nor are they learned by intuition. He that would avail himself of the wisdom of experience, must arm himself with a good share of patience, and must wait; and, if need be, suffer long, in the acquisition of the treasure he covets. The wisdom of age is not for the child, in his youth, nor can the experience of a life be gathered in a few brief days or nights. It is by patiently "enduring the cross, and despising the shame," that we become the experienced and veteran soldiers of Christ.

It is so, in everything. He who would win to himself the treasures of a wide and diversified experience, in any department of the arts and sciences, must first make up his mind to be patient — to meet difficulty after difficulty, and remove obstacle after obstacle, and learn wisdom little by little. Would a man be an experienced and skilful navigator? He cannot sit down at his ease, and become so in an hour. He must go out upon the boisterous sea, and sail in long and

wearisome voyages. He must patiently meet adverse winds, and furious storms, and, through long toilsome years, brave the dangers of the "mighty deep;" for thus, and thus only, can he secure the advantages of a ripe and varied experience. And so, of the healing art. A full and useful experience can only be obtained, by an exercise of the virtue of patience. A man must sit by the bed of the sick, move in the taint and infection of the lazar-house, mark every symptom and development of disease, and patiently endure the petulance and peevishness of the sick and the weak; for thus, only, can he obtain that experience, which is necessary to lead him up to eminence in his profession. And so, of the mechanic and the farmer, and the men of every trade and profession. Would they become skilful, and experienced, they must be patient and persevering

So, also, it is in matters of a religious character. The man who would be wise, in things Divine, and avail himself of the blessedness of a wide and diversified experience, which shall prepare him for every duty, and every emergency,

must call to his aid, all the patience of the Gospel, and prepare to endure, that he may learn wisdom from the things which he suffers. Thus, only, can a man secure experience.

Moreover, the lessons of experience are well-nigh lost upon the man, who is restless and impatient. His mind is absorbed in the contemplation of the ills he suffers, and in the impatience of delay; and he thus fails to lay up the lessons, that speak to him from the scenes through which he passes. And thus, his experience becomes merely nominal; for it adds, neither to his store of wisdom or virtue. But the patient man is, in all the scenes of life, in a frame of mind to seize upon, and treasure up, all the teachings of his experience; to interrogate every trial, danger, and difficulty, and engrave upon his heart the lesson of truth and duty, there taught; and thus, to enlarge the sphere of his knowledge, and prepare himself for yet more efficient labors, in the great field of the Gospel of Christ.

IV. Experience worketh hope.

It is a blessed truth, that the lessons of human experience are lessons of hopefulness and trust in

the Lord. From the evils of life, God is continually evolving good, and the man of long experience will hope often, where others would despair.

Let a passenger, to a distant land, sail in a ship, upon the ocean. There comes a storm; the winds blow wild and bleak; the ocean is troubled, and the waves run high; and it would seem, that the frail bark must be swallowed up in the deep, and all on board go down to a watery grave. How now will fear sit upon the countenance of a stranger to such a scene, and his heart be filled with apprehensions of death, far from the habitations of men! But behold the toil-worn and weather-beaten veteran of the ocean. His face is unblanched with fear. He treads the reeling deck of the rearing, plunging vessel beneath him, with a firm step, and a steady nerve; and his kindling eye is bright with hope, and his countenance serene as a summer morning. And why? He has been there before. He has braved many a tempest, and many a storm. He has seen the wild commotion of the troubled waters; and listened often to the moaning music of the winds, as they have swept through the

shrouds, and played with the hoary locks, upon the crest of the mountain waves. Experience has been his teacher, and has taught him to hope; ay, and he does hope, where your heart and mine would fail, in the gloom of despair.

This is but a picture of human life; for its waters are not all placid, nor its skies serene and bright. On the contrary, there are storms of affliction, that often rise; and waves of sorrow, that threaten, oft, to overwhelm and destroy us. The man of weak faith and limited experience, when first he confronts these evils, is apt to faint and fail. He sees affliction come upon him, and feels, that its deep waters are around him, and fears take hold upon him, that he shall sink, to rise no more.

Or, persecution raises her sword, and threatens to destroy. She "lets slip the dogs of war," and her minions encompass him on every side; and menace him with the loss of all, the world calls good and great. He sees his way hedged up about him, and forgetting, that there is light and help for him, above, his heart sinks, and his spirit dies within him. But the old soldier of

the cross stands there, with heavenward eye, and cheerful hope; firm as a rock, unmoved by the presence or the approach of danger.

The reason is, he has been there before, and experience has taught him, that "the Lord will deliver." Let affliction come. He has buffeted these waters before. Yea, heavily have evils pressed upon him. Under them God has supported him, and out of them, he has delivered him; and all his experience, of the past, bids him hope for the future. Let persecution frown and rage, and put on her most threatening aspect; it moveth him not; but, girt in the omnipotence of truth and righteousness, he stands there, ready to do, and dare, to suffer, and, if need be, to die, upon the altar of his God and Saviour. Experience has taught him, that God's arm is not shortened that it cannot save, and that he will stand by, and defend, and protect, those who put their trust in him.

And, so it is, with all the experience of the world. It is full of all the blessedness of hope. Six thousand years of experience, of man upon the earth, have demonstrated the truth, that

"There 's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we will."

It has proved, that God himself, with all the power of his mighty arm, and all the perfections of his nature, is on the side of righteousness; and that in his name, truth and virtue are an overmatch, for all the legions which sin and falsehood can muster into the field against them. Thus, it is, that experience worketh hope.

V. Hope maketh not ashamed.

The Gospel of Jesus was despised of the world; and its professors were exposed to the "slow contempt of Scorn's unmoving finger." Of him, the great, and the mighty of the earth were ashamed; and the wise men would scorn to learn of one so low, in the estimation of men. Not so with those, whose souls were fired with the inspirations of hope. They were cheered in every difficulty, sustained in every trial, and made bold in every conflict, even in the midst of reviling, contumely, and reproach, by the bright hope of a victory, at last, and an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away. Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed

abroad in the heart that trusteth in him; and that which a man loveth, and hopeth in, he will not blush to own, or be ashamed to acknowledge.

Behold, then, the blessedness of those, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake! Faith, the blessed supporter, comforter, and guide, is tried and perfected. Patience, which suffers long, and meekly endures hardship, without murmurings or repining; experience, rich in lessons of wisdom, to direct in every day of difficulty, or danger; hope, flowing from experience, and leaning upon God; great boldness and confidence, which is not ashamed of truth or of duty;—*these* are the blessings, which come down upon the souls, that falter not, but endure persecution for righteousness' sake. Theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. They give the best possible evidence of submission to the reign of God, and show forth, the most clearly, that "the kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost," is set up in their hearts. May that blessed kingdom be ours now and forever. Amen.

SERMON IX.

CONTENTMENT.

Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. MATT. 6: 34.

IT is a distinguishing feature of the religion of Christ, that it seeks to reconcile man to the present, by giving him bright and cheering views of the future. Other systems labor to excite fears and doubts, in reference to the morrow, and to point out means for escaping the evils with which it is stored. But Christianity endeavors to inspire men's hearts, with a calm and holy confidence in God, as a being in whom all their real interests are permanently and forever safe. "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God: believe also in me," was the exhortation of its Divine author; and by an appeal to the works and ways of God, in creation and providence, he sought to calm each rising fear, and hush each anxious doubt to peaceful rest. "Behold the

fowls of the air. They sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet, your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet, I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

These are the teachings of the blessed Saviour; and thus, did he seek to raise men's thoughts from earth to heaven, and induce them to seek peace and contentment, in a calm and steadfast reliance upon the unwearied care, and never-failing protection, of their God.

It should be observed, however, that there is an evil to be avoided, on both sides of this subject. Nearly all virtues are nearly allied to vices, and the one frequently degenerates into the other. Prudence is a commendable virtue; and the wise man has well said, "The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and avoideth it; but the thoughtless pass

on and are punished." But, that virtue which we call prudence, and which is in itself so desirable, and valuable, is not far removed from a distrustful and miserable anxiety about the future, at once destructive of all present enjoyment, and all trustfulness in the Divine care and protection.

The man in whom prudence has thus degenerated into doubt, and anxious fear, lives in a perpetual alarm. He has no gratitude for, or power to enjoy, present blessings, on account of his distressing anxieties about the future. And in this case, as in many others, the first sin becomes the occasion of many more, which follow in its train. In the spirit of miserly avarice, this man clutches gold with an eager grasp, and, "To the clink of Mammon's box, gives most rapacious heed," and justifies all sorts of dishonesty and rapacity, by the plea, that prudence requires him to take timely thought, and lay up a store for the future.

Now, the argument of the Saviour is aimed at this abuse, rather than the use of common prudence. It decries not, that spirit of wisdom which exercises a wise forethought, and which is grateful

for the present, while it does its duty in regard to the future; but, it disapproves and condemns, that rascally, all-devouring *prudence*, as it is falsely called, which has no faith in God, or humanity, and which, in the excess of its scepticism, relies alone upon self, and cries, day and night, Give, give; but, like the grave, is never satisfied with receiving. The former of these, is a Christian virtue; but the latter justly ranks among the most miserable and guilty vices.

To command man not to think of the future at all, would be to enjoin an impossibility; for we can no more avoid looking into the future, than we can cease to remember the past. The meaning of the text, when liberally construed, seems to be, that we should take no *anxious*, *distrustful* thought for the morrow; but, confiding in that God, who feeds the fowls of the air, and decks the lilies of the field, thankfully enjoy the present, rejoicing in the hope, that he will not leave or forsake us. Thus we may avoid that most miserable of all errors, which draws upon the future for evils wherewith to fill the present;

and, in the absence of *real*, makes imaginary ills for to-morrow.

The truth is, under the best of circumstances, each day will have enough of sorrow and tears; and it is, therefore, folly, as well as impiety, to crowd the evils of to-morrow, by anticipation, into the cup which our Father has mingled for to-day. But while we avoid, on the one hand, an ungrateful and distrustful spirit, on the other, we should have a care, that we rush not into a rash confidence, which will lead us to neglect the duties of to-day, under the vain idea, that our sun of to-morrow will shine equally fair, whether those duties are done, or left undone.

In endeavoring to unfold the duty of the text, and commending a constant and cheerful reliance upon God, as the richest earthly blessing, let us not be understood as pleading for a careless indifference, or stoical apathy; nor yet, for a blind or reckless faith, which folds its arms, and waits for sudden and miraculous interpositions of the Divine power, to save us from the consequences of our ignorance, indolence, or guilt. The true idea is, that God's government is established — his

plan is formed — his laws are fixed, and immutable; and not one, even the least of them, can be altered, or abolished. It is fanaticism, or ignorance, not reasonable and confiding faith, which folds its arms, and waits for God to interfere, with a miracle, and arrest the operation of his laws, or stop the wheels of his government, for the purpose of averting an evil about to come upon us, in consequence of having set those laws at defiance. God's laws are worth too much to this world, and embrace the interests of too many beings, to be thus vacillating, to suit the whim or convenience of every fanatic, who happens to think, that he is of more consequence than all the rest of the world. It ought not to be expected, that the Creator will stop the sun in the firmament, and leave the other side of the world in darkness, for an additional hour, simply to light us home, because we have been out late. Whether we have been at a prayer-meeting, or a ball, the fact will prove, that, the sun will go on, and our business is to work while the day lasts; and, when the evening comes, to rest, in cheerful confidence, that the sun will rise again, and another

day dawn, with its countless blessings, upon the world.

But the virtue of the text rests upon a firm and immovable basis. It sees, not a God whose laws and purposes change with every wind that blows; but it recognizes a Divinity whose government is stable and sure, and whose plans never vary or fail. And it takes no anxious thought for the morrow, because it knows, that the end proposed is benevolent and good, and all the means wise and merciful. It is a government of order, and justice, in which virtue is rewarded, and vice infallibly punished, not in malice, but in kindness. In that government, suffering is not an end, but the means of securing good, to those who endure it patiently. So wisely has God ordered all things, that to each individual, and in each day of life, there is allotted, no more than a necessary and just portion of good or ill; and, though the path we must tread leads through alternate sunshine and storm, it shall end in a bright and glorious day, at last. Such are the views of the Deity and his government, which alone can give that cheerful reliance upon God

which will enable us to comply with the spirit of the text, in leaving the results of the morrow, trustfully, in the hands of Him who made us, and who will conduct us safely through all the conflicts of this life, and bring us to a more near and spiritual communion with himself, in that which is to come.

For evidence, that the reign of God is thus paternal, and benevolent, the Saviour pointed to the fowls of the air, and bade his followers recognize, in their case, the provident care of the Father; and then, rising from the inferior to the superior, to be assured, that he who had been thus faithful to that which was least, would not be found unfaithful, in that which was greatest.

Behold the fowls of the air! God has made rich and ample provisions for them. So full are those provisions, that scepticism itself has no fears, that they will be left to perish. They have no thought for the morrow. "They sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns." They have no anxiety about their stores of food. When the summer sun melts down the frosts and snows of the north, they are there, singing

blithely in each verdant grove, and sending forth their joyous songs to the great Preserver's praise. And when, again, the frosts scatter the leaves in autumn, and old winter comes blustering down from his constant abode, the birds speed their flight to more genial climes; and there, their food awaits them, and they find a place to rest; and all this, without harassing forethought, on their part. Are ye not much better than they? Do we not see, in the case of these tenants of the air, a manifestation of the great truth, that he who made them is provident and kind? That deep down, towards the foundation of his ways, there lies a great conservative law, so wide, that it preserves the countless orbs of heaven, in their places; and yet, so minute, and particular, that, on this dim earth, not so much as a tiny sparrow can fall to the ground, without his notice?

The fact may, doubtless, be regarded as established, that, so far as the lower orders of creation are concerned, there is in operation, a set of wise laws of preservation, which result in ample provisions for them, and in their enjoyment to the full measure of their capacity; and that, too,

without anxious thought on their part. So firmly is this principle established, that none have their doubts or fears about the general and permanent safety of the birds, nor do any apprehend that the morrow will prove destructive to them. Now, the argument of Christ is, that humanity is exalted far above the fowls of the air; — occupying a higher and more exalted position in the scale of being, it is not at all probable, that the same God, who made the birds, and feeds them every one, and every day, has neglected to make ample provisions for man, made in his own image, and capable of an endless approximation to Him who sitteth upon the throne. He hears even the dark raven, when he cries, and marks the sparrow, when it falls; and, we may presume, that he has not left man's highest interests in jeopardy, to be the sport of chance, or food for destruction. On the contrary, his government is so ordered as to cause the good to triumph over the ill, the pleasure over the pain. And, to secure greater safety to man, he has given him reason, to trace and see the laws of God, and be his guide through all the dangers of life.

Should it be asked, why man is not, in all things, provided for, as are the birds, without effort, or thought on his part; the answer is, precisely because we are not birds, but men. We have neither the wings, nor the feathers, of the bird. But we are *men*, exalted of God, placed upon this earth to subdue and have dominion over it — endued with reason, to enlighten and guide us. And can we suppose, for a moment, that God has given us these high privileges, for no other purpose, but to rust out in listless inactivity, or useless idleness, and leave us but beasts, at last? The laws of being, in our case and that of the birds, are necessarily different. Having given us powers and capabilities, which raise us to the head of this earthly creation, he has made it our duty to employ those gifts; and if we refuse, we must suffer the consequences.

Yet, this makes nothing against the truth we have had under consideration. The fixed and permanent principles of the Divine government are unchangeably conservative; and, in their undeviating uniformity, no amount or degree of confidence, was ever found to be misplaced.

This truth is indicated in the case of the fowls of the air, and is more clearly manifested in the dealings of God with man. If we look at our own individual experience, we shall find it true, that, as a general thing, our doubts, and fearful forebodings of evil, have not been realized, in the event. The storm may have gathered dark, and thundered loud, and seemed ready to break upon us; and all the way before us may have appeared utterly inscrutable. But light appeared, full often, where we least expected it. Gradually, the clouds cleared away, and all was bright and glorious again. Or, if the storm came upon us, we had a strength given us, of which we were not aware; and we found, that we could endure what seemed insupportable.

Often, too, has it turned out, that, what we had regarded as the direst evil, and most to be dreaded, was, in fact, but a blessing in disguise; and we have seen good reason to thank God, for having brought us through the furnace of affliction, and by a way that we knew not, to the enjoyment of our most valuable blessings, and precious privileges.

On the whole, we may, any, and all of us, safely say, that our blessedness has been most abundant, and our trials and sufferings less severe, than our fears had led us to anticipate. The result of this experience should be, to impress upon our minds the great truth, that God reigns supreme over all — that his plans and purposes are surely going on, to their completion; and that, being ordered in infinite wisdom and goodness, they are tending to the promotion of the best good of his creatures. Why, then, should we take an anxious or distrustful thought, for the morrow? Why desire to take the government from the hands of Infinite Love, or doubt, or fear, murmur, or complain, at the little ill, which that love sees it is best for us to endure?

True, our little plans may often fail, and all our most sagacious forethought, for the future, may be turned to folly. Human affairs are, at best, subject to a thousand fluctuations and changes; and all human hopes, based upon the wisdom of man, are liable to disappointment. Our prospects in the business of the world, may be cut off, and all that regards this world's goods, end in confu-

sion. Derangement may enter into the affairs of a nation, and we need not be surprised, if we hear complaints and gloomy forebodings of the future. Men may pass us with hurried steps, and with anxious and care-worn countenances. Anxiety may be depicted upon the brow of all we meet; and there may be many days of doubt, and long, sleepless nights of anxious planning, in reference to the future. Still, the sun will rise and shine, and set in the west, and the bright stars will sparkle in the firmament, at night. The ocean will roll its waves, and the streams and rivers flow on and ever. The breezes will blow, the rains will descend, and seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, prevail, as usual. The birds will sing merrily, in the verdant groves, and the lilies of the field will bloom in a beauty, which even Solomon, in all his glory, could not rival, or equal. And, in all creation around us, there will remain the evidences, that God is moving on his own undisturbed affairs — that his government is not subverted, nor the least stone removed from the stable foundation of his throne

of thrones, in the heavens. Then, why these doubts and fears of the future?

The affairs of men, whether considered as nations or as individuals, are not less under his Divine control, than these movements of nature around us. They are all, from the least to the greatest, subjected to uniform and undeviating laws, made by a gracious Father.

When these laws are obeyed, a healthful prosperity will prevail; but when they are disregarded, confusion and distress will follow, by a law of necessity. But even this law is conservative, designed to "teach transgressors God's ways," and tending surely to the destruction of those causes, from which the apparent discord, and present evil, proceed. Cease, then, these gloomy and distrustful fears of the future. God is in heaven, and man upon the earth, now, as ever, the subject of his wise and gracious laws. He who feeds the fowls of the air, and clothes the lilies of the field, will not suffer discord and confusion to reign in this fair universe, that he has made, nor permit his children to fail, or die beyond the hope of redemption.

"Evil and good before him stand,
Their mission to perform;
The sun shines bright at his command,
His hand directs the storm."

Let the duties of the day be promptly and cheerfully done; and, if the morrow does not bring all the bliss we could wish, it will, at least, be less dreadful than our fears had anticipated. Of one thing, we may be certain; the sun of the morrow will be no more fair, nor its skies more bright, for fears indulged, or duties neglected, to-day.

I have, thus far, considered the exhortation of the text, solely in reference to that view of the future, which is bounded by man's present life. There is another, and more important aspect, in which it may properly be considered. "The morrow" may stand as a representative of the whole future, in all its vastness, embracing the whole range of man's being, in time and eternity; and, in that sense, the principle of the text may be applied, and its exhortation appropriately urged. Take no anxious, fearful thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. The past is gone — the

future is to come. The present, only, is ours. In that little moment of time, called the present, we must do and perform, enjoy or suffer all; and he who neglects *that present*, will do nothing, enjoy nothing, though he may suffer much. There is the central point, the only point, of real contact with all our labors, all our enjoyments, and all our woes.

Why, then, should the eternal ages of the future be invoked, by trembling fear and gloomy doubt, to fill that little all of man's conscious life, with its wormwood and gall?

Yet, it is no misrepresentation to say, that there are vast multitudes of our fellow-men, who are "mourning all their days," and utterly incapacitated for the enjoyment of present good, on account of their distressing anxieties and fears, in regard to the far-distant future.

And the most remarkable feature in the case is, that this state of doubt and fear, bordering upon despair itself, is regarded as a favorable symptom — an omen of coming faith, hope, joy, and love; while a compliance with the exhortation of the text, is deemed an evidence of irreligion,

and the precursor of a doom, that the tender heart shudders to name. It is difficult to account for this strange perversion of "the right ways of the Lord," unless it be, upon the hypothesis, of a dreadful apostasy from the faith and practice of the Divine teacher.

The truth is, the evils, and the only evils, we need fear, or labor to remove, are present with us, in this world. Once let this truth be well understood, and men's attention shall be turned to them, and many of them shall be removed.

It is painful to reflect, that, hitherto, men have fixed their eyes so intently on woes, in the dim distance of the future, that the real sufferings of their fellows, in the present, have been well-nigh overlooked. And it is more painful to remember, that those future woes have, in a great degree, absorbed the efforts of the benevolence of the age, and the labors of the Christian world. We boast, indeed, that this is, in a higher sense than any other, an age of benevolence. And it may be so. But, unhappily, that benevolence is excited by fears, and called into exercise in efforts for salvation from the woes of another world,

rather than by hope, and labor for deliverance from the real ills of the present. It is unnecessary to specify these manifestations of the benevolence of the age. They are everywhere to be seen. They enter deeply into most of the religious movements of the day. The capital defect, in the religion of the world, is, that it spreads a pall of darkness over the future, and gives the world little of light and hope, but much of darkness and fear.

Let all the people learn to trust in God, without a doubt or fear; to do their duty, in reference to the present, and leave the future unreservedly with their Father in heaven. Let them heed the admonition of the text, and "take no thought for the morrow;" and then, let all those sympathies, and prayers, and labors, now devoted to the work of saving from the miseries of another world, be enlisted in efforts for relieving the actual sufferings of earth; — and, O! what a world of sorrow would be relieved! How many widows' hearts would be made to sing for joy, who now sit, in the loneliness of their desolation and widowhood, unpitied, uncared for, and forgotten!

How many homes, now filled with want, would become abodes of plenty! And how many an orphan, poor, lonely, and unbefriended, would lift a thankful voice and heart to heaven, for deliverance from the devouring jaws of famine and death! And how would want, and woe, and suffering, in every form, find ready and efficient relief, and earth itself smile, as if an army of angels had come down to bless its needy and suffering children, and plead their cause against the powers that bow their heads in sorrow, from the cradle to the grave!

Far in the distance of the future, whose horizon is studded with stars, bright as that, which shone on Bethlehem, when the Saviour was born, I see the day, when hope shall revive, and doubt and despair shall die. Then, shall man awake from that awful dream, which has for ages paralyzed his energies, and made him powerless for good; and, in the strength of an unfaltering faith, and an animating hope, grapple with the evils of the present; and his efforts shall tell with tremendous power upon the melioration of the condition of his race. Then, man shall no more fear to

trust his God with the disposal of all his interests, for time and eternity, nor take one fearful thought for the morrow; and holy peace, and heavenly joy, shall fill his confiding, grateful heart.

Until that time comes, it behooves us to cultivate, in our own hearts, a cheerful and enlightened trust in the Lord, even in those dark and mysterious passages of his government, where the eye of reason cannot discover the chain, that binds us to the throne of his mercy.

Cease this "peevish, poor complaining," and looking up to God, even in tempest and storm, learn to smile amid your woe! Behold, there are bows of promise in every cloud, stars in every night! Upon these let us fix a steadfast eye, and when the summons comes to call us from earth, we can

> "Quit its vain scenes without a fear —
> Without a sorrow or a tear —
> And mingle with the dead;"

and still hope for the resurrection and the life; and an eternity, all cloudless and serene.

SERMON X.

GOD'S CARE FOR MAN.

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? MATT. 5 : 30.

IN a previous discourse, I spoke of the impropriety of indulging in anxious thought, and gloomy doubts and fears, in regard to the future. I endeavored to commend to you, a cheerful spirit, which is satisfied with, and grateful for the present, and which looks hopefully forward, and trustingly upward, under all the changing, and even the apparently adverse circumstances, of human life. It was more than intimated, that a steadfast confidence in God, is the foundation, upon which alone, this cheerful contentment can rest; and it is our present purpose, to take another view of the same general subject, in an attempt to unfold the necessity, and propriety, of this confiding trust in God.

It may not be improper to repeat, in the outset, what has already been intimated, that enlight-

ened trust in God does not imply, that a man must sit himself down, in listless inactivity, and wait for God to feed and clothe him, by an extraordinary, or miraculous interposition, vainly supposing, that it will be equally well with him, whether duties are done, or neglected. God has, indeed, made full and ample provisions for the wants of his creatures; but man must take the necessary means to secure and appropriate these provisions to his use. He has, for instance, adapted the earth to our necessities, giving us seed-time and harvest, sunshine and rain, so that the fields can bud and bring forth seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, and there need be no lack of food, for man and beast. But, it does not thence follow, that man may sit in idleness, and neglect to sow the seed, or to cultivate the soil, saying, he will trust God for food; because the inflexible law is, that "he that sleepeth in seed-time shall beg in harvest, and have nothing." But, a true trust in God, sees that there are duties to be performed; and, placing itself in harmony with the laws and arrangements of the Divine providence and government, it waits

the result without a doubt or a fear. And now, what I wish to say is, that, when man has done all he can do, — when all duties have been faithfully performed, and every effort has been made, that human agency can put forth, — still, there is need of trust in God. Such is man's weakness, and such are the circumstances in which he is placed, that confidence in something, without and above himself, is indispensable to his present happiness.

There is a sphere, in which we can act, and certain duties that we can perform; and in reference to those duties, and in that sphere, there is a degree of self-reliance, that may be indulged; for, without it, no effort would be made. But, when all man's work is done, it is true, that, though one may have planted the seed, and another watered and nursed the tender blade, "God only can give the increase," and he alone must be trusted for that boon.

Besides, we are ignorant of the future, and even of much of the present. There is a rapid and resistless current, continually bearing us along; and every day impresses upon our minds

the truth, that our strength is little more than weakness. Hence, we instinctively look about us, or above us, for some power, in which we can trust. There is no want of our nature, more clearly manifest, or more imperious in its demands, than this; nor is there one whose satisfaction affords more heart-felt joy. It begins in earliest infancy, and shows itself in every period of human life. The little child is ignorant and helpless; and, left to his own exertions, for support, would soon famish and die. But, it is a wise and beautiful arrangement of God, in nature, that the child looks up, with a firm and undoubting confidence, to the parent, and leans, with perfect trustfulness, for support, upon that arm which it instinctively feels to be strong, and mighty to bless. From this trust, the smiles and the joys of childhood flow. Destroy it, and that happy child shall be worse than an orphan. So it is, in youth; and when the years of manhood arrive, and we become prepared to assume the duties and responsibilities of life, and to engage in its stern conflicts, we may properly indulge a degree of self-reliance. But nature is not changed, so

that we have no need to trust in anything but self.

New objects, duties, and relations, may present themselves, and the confidence reposed in the parent may be transferred to other powers; but obliterated it cannot be, without violence to nature itself.

Take an illustration. The traveller steps on board the gallant ship, and sails for a distant land. Joyfully he launches out, upon the trackless ocean. The darkness of the midnight hour may be around him — the strong wind may blow, and the waves run high. So far as he is concerned, he may not know the north from the south, or be able to do the first or least act, necessary to secure the safety, or success, of the voyage. But, trusting in the care, and the skill, of the toil-hardened veteran of the ocean, and feeling secure in that confidence, his heart is light and joyous, and he can lay him down, and sleep sweetly upon the vast solitude of the waters. It is confidence, alone, that renders his condition even tolerable. Destroy it, for one moment, or disturb it, in the least degree, and there is an end of all quietness,

or enjoyment. Let the voyager suspect the skill, or the faithfulness, of his commander; or, throw him upon his own resources, and let him understand, that he must depend upon himself, alone, to navigate the ship, and soon you shall see the gloom of doubt and despair settling upon that countenance, now mantled in smiles, and radiant with hope.

This is but a picture of human life; for we are all travellers upon the voyage of time. Launched upon an ocean, where storm and tempest often rise — where the waters are troubled, and the sea boisterous — where clouds frequently gather, dark and fearful, and the winds blow bleak and wild — we need a trustful confidence in some power, stronger than an arm of flesh, to hold the helm; some wisdom, more far-seeing than human ken, to guide us, and enable us to avoid the rocks, and dangers, that fill the way. That man is an exception to his nature, who feels that he is, in his own strength, able to enter this great struggle, and buffet the winds and the waves, with neither God, nor good angels, to strengthen, guide, guard or protect him, in the mighty conflict.

I insist, that nature itself, with its first and highest impulses, involuntarily, instinctively, and irresistibly, looks upward for aid, and yearns for some firm foundation of hope and trust, with longings which cannot be destroyed. For this reason, men, everywhere, and of all grades and conditions of life, have their gods, to whom they flee, in their hours of weakness, peril, or danger. If they cannot find the true God, they will carve out an image, and flee for help to its altar; or, they will repose their confidence in the sun, the moon, or stars, or in the beasts and creeping things of the earth. So that, the dark and ill-boding superstitions of the world, are but the evidences of the strength of the principle; and thus, through every land and nation, tribe and tongue, under the whole heavens, and from every temple and altar, that man has reared, to gods real or imaginary — from every bleeding victim and bended knee, and in every prayer, that goes up from human tongue — the voice of nature itself is heard, full and clear, testifying, that man needs, and that he *must* and *will* have, some power in which to trust, in those emergencies,

where the truth of his own weakness is forced upon him, by events which he can neither direct or control. Dim and shadowy, perhaps, may be their conceptions of the being, in whom they confide; and crude and vague, their notions of his nature and character; yet, to him do they go, and in him do they trust, when worn with the battle of life, or weak with the toil of the conflict, in which they are engaged.

If such is the necessity of trust and confidence in a superior power, and such the important ministries it has to perform, it will readily be perceived, how equally important it is, that this confidence should be reposed in a substantial reality, — in a being who exists, and who is able, and willing, to deliver and bless, at all times.

In the most common affairs of life, we understand well, the importance of the question, Whom shall we trust? And so, in the momentous concerns of religion, affecting, as they do, the question of our unspeakable interests in all time, and through the whole range of the interminable ages of a vast eternity, there is a still more imperious necessity, that we should look

well to the foundation of our hopes, and see to it, that our trust rests upon one who will not fail or disappoint us, in any amount of confidence, that we may repose in him.

The testimony of revelation and experience is, that it is safer to trust in the Lord, than in an arm of human mould. If we trust in ourselves, we shall find that we are weak, and must often yield to the pressure of circumstances, that we cannot control. If we trust our fellow-men, we shall find, that they are frail mortals, like ourselves, and that, our best friends will often leave us, in those dark and mysterious passages of life, where our strength is taxed to the utmost, and we feel, that we most need their aid.

If we trust in the gods of this world, they are but vanity; and the end will be the bitterness of disappointment.

If we trust in the kings and potentates of earth, a few rolling suns may find them hurled from their thrones of power, and "none so poor as to do them reverence." But there is one power, that can be trusted. It is the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth, whose arm is never short-

ened that it cannot save; and in whom is centred all perfection, glory, and goodness; and all whose ways prove, that he is a God, who may be trusted without fear of danger or disappointment. From age to age, he has been the same. He has caused his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sent his rain upon the just and the unjust. With undeviating regularity, the earth has pursued her course, the day and the night, the spring and the autumn, have succeeded each other — the waters have gushed from the fountains, the balmy breezes have blowed, and all nature has been made to minister to the wants of man. And all these are testimonies of the ever-present care of the Universal Father, — the clear and tangible evidences, that he does not, and *will* not, forsake the creatures, he has made. Proofs they are, that men may safely trust him, and that those who build upon this foundation shall not be ashamed.

To these, are added the testimonies of the Divine word, in which God's faithfulness is set forth, as transcending that of a parent, to his child; so that, when "a father and mother"

shall forsake us, "the Lord will take us up." Let men talk as they will. Let them call it, if they choose, superstition, fanaticism, or folly. The truth is, there are seasons in the history of every human being, and those seasons are neither "few nor far between," when this is all that remains, and comfort and joy must come thence, or come not at all.

When pleasure palls upon the senses, and all our best-laid plans are frustrated in the bud, or when the fruit was ripening for the harvest; — when sickness preys upon the body, the burning fever is upon the brow, and the sufferer is tossed, through long nights of agony, upon a bed of pain; — when the light of life is dim, and the film of death is gathering upon the eye, and the earth, and all its beauties are fading, as fades the beauteous landscape, when the evening shades are setting upon the world, — *then*, must we trust in God, or sink in despair. And "to this complexion must we all come at last;" and *then*, if not before, shall we feel our need of a hope "fast anchored in heaven."

From what has been offered, thus far, it would

seem, that man hath need to trust in God, and that, there is abundant reason for reposing our confidence, in the Being who clothes the lilies of the field, in robes of beauty, and exercises a constant and sleepless vigilance over the interests, and the wants, of all departments of his wide dominion. There are, however, many causes constantly in operation, to prevent men from exercising a hearty and filial confidence in the Deity. Among these, I name,

I. The wickedness of men's lives.

There is a great lesson of truth and duty, in the old saying of the ancients, "The gods help those, that help themselves." We have before seen, that there are duties, which man has to perform; and the neglect of these duties is a fatal bar to heartfelt confidence in the Divine aid. The man who has spent the seed-time in idleness, and neglected to sow his fields, cannot persuade himself, that he either deserves, or will receive from God, a bountiful harvest. It is only when the husbandman has planted the seed, and promptly performed his duty, that he can feel, that he has placed himself in the way of receiv-

ing a blessing; and then only can he trust God, for the accustomed supply for his garner.

It is precisely so, in all other cases. Neglect of duty interposes a veil between man and his God, so that, he cannot feel confident of his blessings. He knows, he does not deserve it; he has not placed himself in the way of receiving it; and however true it may be, that God is still most merciful and kind, the soul cannot feel a sense of this kindness, or calmly trust in his mercy.

Hence, you will find it true, as a general rule, that the more guilty a man is, the more suspicious he will be of his fellow-men. Who so ready to suspect others of falsehood, as the man who is himself a liar? Who so ready to join in the chase, and cry "stop thief!" as the very thief himself? Who thinks every man he meets intoxicated, so readily as the man who is himself reeling under the influence of strong drink? The answer is plain, and we need not dwell. My purpose was merely to call attention to this feature of humanity, by way of illustrating the subject in hand. Long habit has confirmed the

world in the way of judging others by themselves. Accustomed to measure their fellows, by the line of their own stature, men take the same rule and apply it to God, and thus fulfil that Scripture which saith, "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thou art." Man feels, that he is faithless himself, and he cannot realize the truth, that God is faithful. He has forgotten or neglected his own duty, and there rises in his soul the suspicion, that God will forget, or neglect him. Thus the eternal being becomes invested, in his mind, with all the hurtful passions that degrade and torment poor humanity, and becomes a being whom man cannot love, and dare not trust.

So, then, it is sin, that has estranged men from God, and robbed them of their confidence in his care and protection. It was so with our first parents. They had no sooner transgressed, than their confidence in their Father was destroyed, and they were afraid, and hid themselves among the trees of the garden. It was so with Cain, when he slew his brother, and said, "It shall come to pass that whosoever seeth me, shall slay me." It was so with the children of Israel, when

they sinned in the wilderness. The effect was, they lost their confidence in God, and turned back, and tempted the Holy One.

It was so with David, when he sinned, and fear came upon him, lest God should cast him off forever. And it ever was, and ever will be so, with all those that violate the laws of God. There is a damning influence in sin, which shuts out the light of Divine truth from the understanding, and prevents the heart from feeling, even if the tongue confesses, that the Lord is good and gracious.

He, then, who would feel the full blessedness of that confidence in God, so beautifully and cogently urged upon us, in the text, must keep clean hands, and a pure heart. The man who has carefully done his duty, feels that he has performed all, that can be performed by human power; and he can, therefore, with a good conscience, trust God, for all else, and lean with readiness upon that arm, from which alone, help can come. Of such it is said, "He shall not be afraid of the pestilence, when it walketh in darkness, nor of the destruction that wasteth at noonday. At destruction and famine shall he laugh;

and though he walk through the valley and shadow of death, he shall fear no evil, for the rod and the staff of the Almighty, that shall comfort him." And this is the reason, that while "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, the righteous are as bold as a lion." The one feels guilt in his soul, and has no confidence in the protection of God; but the other trusts in the Lord, and believes that he will deliver him.

II. Another cause of man's want of confidence in God, may be found, in the too general prevalence of gloomy and distrustful views of religion.

Could men but understand, that religion is designed for their best comfort and strength; to draw them nearer to God, instead of repelling them from him — many of those doubts and fears, which so "waste their faith and nourish their despair," would vanish away. Could they be persuaded to see God as he is, unveiled, and unperverted by the false lights in which he is too often presented; and could they be led up to a perception of the true nature and principles of his government, they would cleave to him, as the child to the bosom of its mother, and trust him

unreservedly; no longer dreaming, that a real evil could, by any possibility, come from his hand. But, we have gone out of the way, and the great mass of us have been subjected to a course of training, and education, which is not only unsuited to the production of confidence in God, but absolutely well calculated to uproot every vestige of that confidence, where haply it may be found.

Not to descend to particulars, or assail the cherished creed of any particular sect, it is obvious, that the general view of the Divine government, and its final results, is such, as renders it a curse, rather than a blessing, to vast multitudes of the human race. And it not unfrequently happens, that the first impression, a child receives of God, is that of a being from whom he has really less to hope, and more to fear, than from all the wicked men and demons in the universe. The impression thus received, "grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength;" is confirmed by all religious teachings; and the man is thus necessarily made suspicious and doubtful, so that he cannot trust

God, if he would. Religion comes to him, ever, not with a radiant smile, and an eye bright with hope and joy; but it comes clothed in sablest words of mourning — with a countenance sad in sorrow, bewailing, with many tears, the doom that awaits the children of men in eternity; or else, with maniac eye and dishevelled hair, crying, like the strange messenger in Jerusalem, on the eve of its downfall, "Woe! Woe! Woe to the city! Woe to the temple and the people! Woe, also, to myself!" And what chance has poor humanity to cultivate, or cherish in its heart of hearts, a lofty, calm, and cheerful trust in the Lord, while the voice of wrath is thus constantly sounding in its ears? The true cause of wonder is, not that men forbear to trust in the Lord, but that any dare trust him at all. Nothing, I am sure, but the imperious and everlasting necessities of man — the deep and hungry cravings of the soul for reliance upon a higher power, has preserved, even a fragment of faith to the world. But for that, the race would have become infidel, long ago.

It is time, this veil of darkness was removed

from the face of the excellent glory; and religion presented to the world with more to cheer, animate, and encourage, and less to awe, depress, and dissuade from all filial reliance upon God. It is time that voice was heard, in the temple of worship, which sounded so gently and mercifully upon the mountain of old. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet, I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, will he not clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

More than most of us imagine, does the world need the ministries of a hopeful and cheerful religion, which shall bind man to the altars of his God, by the ties of filial love and duty; draw out his heart in an unreserved confidence in the Most High, and forbid all that could suggest a suspicion of his everlasting faithfulness.

Such is the religion of Christ; and such will it be seen to be, when the clouds of ignorance shall be removed, and the sombre shadows of gloomy

ages past, shall vanish before the clear light of the revelation of the Father's name, and the Father's love.

Meanwhile, it becomes us to cherish, in our own hearts, a steadfast trust in God, and labor for the dissemination of higher hopes, and purer joys among our sorrowing fellow-men. Thus shall we secure to ourselves, the "soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy," and reap "good hope and everlasting consolation," in that hour, which shall call us hence, to be here no more!

SERMON XI.

THE PATIENCE OF HOPE.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him that prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. PSALM 37: 7.

THERE is a God, who rules and reigns on earth, and controls the destinies of the children of men. His government is established in righteousness, truth, and justice, and is so ordered, that virtue is its own reward, and vice sure of a just and equitable punishment. These are great truths, which are very near the foundations of religion, and their vast importance cannot be over-estimated. Man knows, that his arm is weak, in many of the conflicts of life; and when difficulties surround him, and obstacles seem reared full and impassable before him, — when virtue is sorely tried, and vice holds out her tempting allurements, and repeats her specious promises of good, — *then* is there need of a faith fast anchored in heaven —

a faith, which can look away from the deceptions of outward appearances, and believe, that, sooner or later, truth and duty shall triumph, and calmly and patiently wait the issue.

In the chapter from which our text is selected, the Psalmist treats of one of the most difficult problems presented, in the government of God. I allude to that apparent prosperity, which often attends the wicked, and the success, which frequently seems to crown the evil machinations of vicious and unprincipled men. He does not deny the fact, but admits, that wicked devices are frequently brought to pass, and the wicked often prosper in their way, for a season; and then he cautions us, not to let this truth shake our confidence in the rectitude of the Divine government; for this prosperity and success are only momentary. There is, still, a God, who ruleth; and time, which tries all things, shall reveal the omnipotence of virtue, and establish the fact, that its victory is ultimately sure. Hear him. "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither

as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall thou dwell in the land, and verily shalt thou be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy ways unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him that prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

Such is the great lesson, which I would wish to illustrate, and impress upon your minds, in the present discourse. *God reigns* in eternal equity and justice, over all the inhabitants of the earth. Appearances may often give to vice an apparent prosperity, and indicate, that truth and duty are crushed, and trampled in the dust. Yet, it need not disturb us. God lives. We have but to wait in calm confidence and patient hope; for the veil will be uplifted, at last, and then, shall it appear, that virtue alone is permanent and safe and all the triumphs of vice delusive and false.

Let us endeavor to obtain a clear view of the facts, and circumstances, to which the exhortation of the text should be applied.

Consider, for a moment, the prosperity of the wicked, as it is seen in outward appearances around you. I use the term prosperity here, of course, in the sense in which it is used by the world, to denote temporal thrift, success in gathering riches, and accumulating the good things of this life. It is doubtless true, that honesty and persevering industry, will, under ordinary circumstances, procure a man a competency of the goods of the world, and give a comfortable livelihood. But, I suppose it is equally apparent, that *great wealth* is not accumulated in this way. Labor is the only real producer of the wealth of the world; and, it is manifest, on a moment's reflection, that, no man can live long enough to procure by the sweat of his brow, anything like what the world calls a fortune.

Hence, when you find a man, with an estate of some hundreds of thousands, or, perhaps, millions, you know, well enough, that he did not get it by his own industry, and that, it is the product

of the labor of others, — not of his own hands. How he came by it, is another matter. For aught I know, he may have got it honestly; that is, measuring honesty, by the laws and customs of society, and the maxims of commercial probity and honor. But it is not quite certain, that these are in perfect accordance with the standard of eternal justice and equity. The world is a battle-field; the prize is gold; and men inquire not, who falls in this battle, but who rises; and as for the means employed, they are of little consequence, so that they do not transcend the limits of honorable, *civilized* warfare.

The *right*, or the *wrong*, is of minor importance. It sufficeth, that the man is *rich;* and though thousands are crushed beneath his heel, and left to pine in want, through his means, it is no matter, so that, he did it in a scientific way, and according to the rules of this commercial war.

But, let that pass. The fact is, as a general thing, the man who bows down most obsequiously at the shrine of Mammon, and worships there with most hearty devotion, — if he is shrewd

and *cautious*, withal, and not over-nice about grinding the face of the poor, — so that, he keeps within the law, *that man* is quite likely to become rich. Whether his riches are really of great service to him, in the way of making him happy, I inquire not now. I merely state the fact, as a general rule, that large fortunes are acquired by rapacity, and skill in clutching from others by means, fair or foul, as the case may be, the fruit of their toil. But these are the *prosperous* men of the world, whose situation excites the envy of their fellows. The poor man, complains, and frets, because of such as these. *He* earns his bread, by the sweat of his brow. *He* has not oppressed, or wronged, his fellow-man. *He* has labored industriously, and rendered unto all their dues; and yet, he has never been able to do more than procure for himself, and his family, the means of an humble livelihood. He canot see why God should so prosper his avaricious, and perhaps, overreaching neighbor, while *he* toils equally hard, and yet, remains in the vale of poverty, all the days of his life. He sees here, as he thinks, something unequal in

the ways of Divine Providence; and, it may be, he even doubts, that a just God has anything to do with the affairs of men, else he would rectify these evils.

Again, and on a wider scale, there is an apparent prosperity of wickedness, and success attending many of the evil machinations, and mischievous devices, of men.

We look abroad in the world, and see kings and potentates clothed with power, and riding in the car of state, over the prostrate liberties of the people. Huge masses of our fellow-men lie, crushed and bleeding at the feet of the usurper of dominion over man; and *there*, from age to age, they sigh, and cry in vain for relief.

If Ireland's down-trodden children raise a voice, or a hand, to free themselves from the oppressions of ages, that voice is hushed, and that hand is palsied by the arm of the oppressor. If the vine-clad hills of France echo with the notes of freedom, and her people rise in their might, and throw off a yoke, which has long been galling upon their necks, immediately there is a plan on foot to impose another yoke, scarcely less galling;

and the shade of Napoleon is hardly more tolerable, than the body of the living Bourbon. If Rome finds her burden intolerable, and rises in her strength, to cast it off, and succeeds; forthwith, the cannon of republican France are heard thundering at her gates, and the scheme of iniquity is consummated. Rome, proud and mighty as she once was, and with a heart now true to liberty, as the needle to the pole, is crushed, by an iron arm, and doomed to suffer, yet longer, from that accursed tyranny of body and soul under which she has so long groaned, and cried, in vain for relief. If Hungary lifts a mighty arm, and strikes for constitutional liberty and law, the myriads of Austria are marshalled for the battle, and sent forth to strangle the infant Hercules in his cradle; the Russian bear raises his sullen growl; the Czar throws his ponderous sword in the scale, and his hordes come tramping down from the north; Georgey turns traitor; the heroic Magyars melt away before the hosts, that oppose them; Kossuth, the godlike, with his fellows, are hunted as beasts, and poor prostrate

Hungary is doomed to more cruel oppression, and deeper misery and degradation.

Thus the evil devices of the enemies of man, are brought to pass, and all present hope is cut off. I do not wonder, that men grow impatient, and fretful, in view of these things. Considering the weakness of human faith, it is natural for man to cry out, as many do, "Where is the Lord, that he does not come to the rescue?" Where is his mighty arm, that it is not uplifted to defend the right? And where the lightnings of his wrath, that they do not blast the impious men, who riot in blood, and oppress and grind their fellows to powder?

I acknowledge, the problem is hard to solve. I see in it, the necessity of faith. I grant, if you please, in these, as in many other things, there is *mystery*, that no human reason, or human philosophy, can solve. The facts exist, as we all know, and the explanation of them is beyond our province. The only thing we can do, is, to "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." We need not fret about it, for it will do no good; nor need we cast away our faith in God, because he

does not work as fast, or at the precise time, that we may think best. Suppose we turn atheists, and deny the being, and government of God. It will not help the matter, at all. Still the melancholy facts will exist, precisely as they do now, and we shall have to look them in the face. Not a particle of misery shall we relieve, not a manacle of oppression shall we knock off, by flying in a passion in our impatience, and charging God with injustice, or denying his name. Do this, never so indignantly, or confidently, and still, there is that same picture of poverty and oppression, on the one hand, and tyranny and power, on the other, and upon that, we must still look. May we not contemplate it, with more of composure, if we look with a steadfast faith in God? And does not our own happiness call upon us to heed the admonition of the text, to "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; and fret not because of those, that bring evil devices to pass?"

I have before admitted, that no human wisdom can give a full explanation of the reason, or philosophy of these things. There are, however,

many considerations, which will fully justify that "patience of hope," which is recommended by the Psalmist, in our text. Some of these I will proceed to notice.

I. Virtue is, in itself, the most valuable of all blessings.

No earthly good can be compared to "a well-ordered life, and a conscience void of offence." It is a well-spring of happiness, that never fails. No wealth can purchase it, no prosperity can secure it; and, thank God, no poverty can rob a man of it, or adversity take it away. What then, does it signify, if one is poor and another rich, or the good man oppressed, and the bad man clothed in power? The truth is, a man's happiness depends upon what he is, not upon what he *has*. You tell me, you toil hard, and endeavor to do that which is right, yet, you accumulate no wealth. True, but if you have preserved your virtue, you possess that, which wealth cannot buy, and bear about with you continually, a jewel more precious than all the gold of the world. But you say: Here is another man, who is proud, haughty, and rapacious, who grinds the

face of the poor, and lives by extortion and dishonesty, and he is prosperous, and wealth flows by thousands into his coffers. And what of all that? If he has bartered his virtue, his truth and justice, his duty to God, and his own conscience for his wealth, he has made but a sorry bargain, after all. His gold cannot make him happy. It cannot ease the troubled spirit, cure a pain, or heal a disease of the body, or pluck a single thorn from the pillow of death. The time is near, when it will cease to dazzle, and the man will lament the choice he has made.

You point me, again, to the people of the Old World, many of them down-trodden, and oppressed, and you mourn over their sufferings, and wonder why God does not send a blasting curse to smite their oppressors. But do you, as often, think of the condition of their rulers? Do the kings and potentates sit easily upon their thrones? And is it all peace and sunshine with them? Nay, there is not, upon the wide earth, a more miserable set of human beings, than these whom you so much envy. They are pale with fear. They dare not even walk freely upon God's earth, or

meet their fellow-men, without being walled about with swords and bayonets. Give me my choice, to-day, and I would rather be the humblest peasant of Italy, than the Pope; and there is not, at this moment, in this city, a mechanic in his work-shop, delving at the anvil, toiling with the axe or saw, or plying the needle, or the shuttle, who would not be immeasurably the loser, in point of real happiness, were he to exchange his present position for a seat on any throne, upon which the sun of heaven shines. So then, there is not so much real inequality as appears upon the surface of things; and humble though your lot may be, you can afford to wait patiently upon God, and fret not because evil designs are brought to pass.

He, that is established in virtue, may look upon man unblanched; and up to heaven with a trusting heart; and draw down thence, feelings the vile cannot know, though clothed in gold and crimson.

Another reason why we may remain undisturbed at the success of evil devices, may be found in the fact, that the moment of most tri-

umphant success, is often the era of most overwhelming defeat. Behold the brethren of Joseph, plotting evil against him. They laid their plan, as they thought, with the most far-reaching wisdom. They conspired against him, to kill him, and finally sold him into Egypt. And now, they have succeeded. The helpless boy is taken from home, and carried to a strange land, a slave in his chains; and they were ready to say, in their triumph, "Let us now see what will become of his dreams!" Short-sighted mortals, that they were! Their victory was their defeat. All unconsciously, but truly, they had been working out the very thing they intended to defeat. Their success, it was, which fixed and adjusted the means, that were to elevate Joseph to honor, and glory, and cover themselves with confusion and shame. The old patriarch had as much reason, as most men, to be impatient and fretful under the evils which came upon him; but the end proved, that he might well have rested in God, and waited patiently for him to work his sovereign will, in his own way.

Look at Christ, while on earth, surrounded by

his bitter enemies. Their hearts were full of malice against him, and at every step, they were watching an opportunity to destroy him. They finally succeeded to their hearts' content. They brought him to the judgment-seat; procured his condemnation; took him to the cross, and put him to a most cruel and ignominious death. This was success enough for his most malignant foe. The hated Nazarene was dead. His body was in the tomb, cut from the solid rock. The great stone was at the door, — the seal upon it, and a guard of soldiers there, to see that it was not taken away. Then, rose the shout of victory, from all the hosts of enemies. Then failed the hearts of friends. Evil devices had been brought to pass, and all was lost.

Yet, do you not see, that all this success only served to make more sure their defeat; for thus, they adopted the very means of giving to him a name above every name, and of sealing with the Divine impress, spreading far and wide, and perpetuating to remotest ages of time, that religion which they so earnestly sought to destroy. That day of their success, was the darkest they ever

saw, for them, and the brightest and most auspicious, for him; and the result shows, that although Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered against him, yet, it was but to do what God's counsel had determined before to be done. Well then, might the world "rest in God, and wait for him."

Another reason for the exercise of this patience of hope is, that God is not confined to a narrow space of time, for the accomplishment of his purposes.

Man has but a few days, in which he can work. For this reason, he must be in haste, and do quickly whatever he does. He can accomplish nothing, and witness it, but such things as are bounded by his own life. Short as that life is known to be, it is natural, that he should be impatient of delay, and anxious to see the success and triumph of his plans. But it is not so with God. He has an eternity before him, and need not be in haste. His plans extend through all time and eternity, and man need not hope, that they will be matured, and all their results realized in three score years and ten. The bat-

tle is so long, that none can predict its issue from a single skirmish on the distant outposts of the field. Hopeless as any fragment of time may appear, when viewed by itself, yet the history of the world, as a whole, is full of encouragement, and incentives to patience and hope. See the humble savage, with his quiver and his bow. He roams an uncultivated waste. The wild beasts are around him — his employment, the chase — his glory, in war; his dwelling, the cave, or the hut; his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him. How low his estate! How few his enjoyments! And that is the infant state of man. From that, God, in the revolutions of ages, has brought us up to a state of enlightened civilization, where blessings without number are poured in rich profusion, all around us. The hut of the savage has given place to the stately temple; the bow, to the implements of industry; the swarthy savage, to the civilized man. The rivers are ploughed by the keels of the steamship — the mountains are tunneled, and through their dark caverns, and along the green vales, man travels with the speed of the wind.

The nerves of thought link nations, and human words are sent, on the lightning's wing, to the remotest corners of the earth, with a speed that time himself cannot reach. The stars are numbered, and the human intellect grasps the infinity of space, and lays its vast worlds, as a map, at our feet. Truly, these six thousand years have not been wasted. In them, God has done something for man, after all. Dark periods to man's vision, there may have been — seasons when the victory of evil might have seemed almost complete. But fix upon the dreariest point, you can find, when all hope of human redemption seemed blotted out — and the result proves, that even then, there was reason to "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." And so now, evils there may be remaining, and poor mortals, as has been their wont, from the beginning, undertake to reform them. They toil with zeal, for a day; and because in that brief moment they do not see the work of ages performed, impatient of an hour's delay, "they fret and fume," and complain of the ways of God; tax his justice, and often deny his name, or give the world over, as

too bad to be redeemed. Poor child of a moment, as thou art; cease thy fretful murmurings against God! His age is not, like thine, a few fleeting years. Eternity is his, and he worketh always. Even in the inequalities and antagonisms of which you complain, he is quickening human energies, training human intellect, and gathering, and augmenting powers, which will one day tell with tremendous effect upon the evils, you so much deplore. Cease, then, this poor complaining. Rest thou in God, and be patient, while you wait for him. When the sun rises, it will be light — not before.

SERMON XII.

REST FOR THE WEARY.

Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. MATT. 11: 28—30.

To come unto Christ, is a phrase used to denote — believing on him; and hence, it is easy to perceive, that the truth of the sentiment of the text, was afterwards fully vindicated, in the experience of the apostle and his companions in the faith, where he says, "We that have believed do enter into rest."

The yoke is used, as an emblem of authority. To put a yoke upon a man, is to bring him under your authority; and to take a yoke, upon yourself, is to come under the government of another. When, therefore, the Saviour says, "Take my yoke upon you," I understand him to require, submission to his authority, in matters of faith and practice.

The declaration, that his yoke is easy, and his burden light, is given as a reason, why those who submitted to his rule should find rest unto their souls.

The call is, to those who were already worn with labor, and fainting under the heavy burdens imposed upon them; and the assurance is, that relief and rest should be theirs, if they would come to him, and submit to his authority.

In regard to this matter of authority, I must offer a few remarks, because there are those, who, in the pride of their own vain hearts, affect to scorn the idea of submission to any authority, in matters of religion. They are willing to go to Christ, and learn of him as they would of Socrates, or Plato, or a wise man, or philosopher, of modern times. They would listen respectfully to what he has to say, and if it appeared to harmonize with their notions of truth, they would receive it; but otherwise, cast it away. And there are men of this sort, who really seem to think it a matter of some condescension, on their part, to listen to the Gospel at all; and especially so, if they are so well pleased, as to *patronize Christ* in some

small degree, as they would patronize an advocate of some new theory in philosophy.

Now, as opposed to this view, arrogant as it is, I cite you to the truth, indicated in the text, that Jesus claimed *authority;* he required men, not merely to listen to him, for the purpose of criticizing his teachings; but he demanded, that they should *learn* of him, and take his yoke upon them. They should place themselves in the attitude of pupils, and submit to his authority. Thus much is plainly taught, in the text; and it matters not how eloquently a man may talk of the beauty of the philosophy of the Saviour, or boast of his willingness to believe as much of his teachings, as can be shown to consist with human reason, and human science; the truth is, unless he has placed himself, as a *learner*, at the feet of Christ, and acknowledged him, as an authoritative teacher, of truth and duty, he has not performed the *first act* of obedience, or taken the first step towards becoming a Christian.

Nor is this an unjust, or an unreasonable requirement; for, man is so feeble, and his intellect so limited in the sphere of its operations, that he

must have, and must *rely upon* authority of some sort, in every department of human knowledge, and at every step of improvement; and without this, there is no such thing as progress, in any art or science. There are truths, that can be demonstrated mathematically, or proved by philosophical experiment, or chemical analysis. But, even here, the inquirer necessarily relies upon the authority of those, who have gone before him, and takes for granted, that their discoveries are true, else he would make next to no progress at all. So that, *authority* is indispensable, even in the physical and exact sciences. But the great truths of religion are without the dominion of human science — *above* the efforts of the unaided reason of man, and must be taught authoritatively, or not at all. And hence, the reasonableness of Christ's requirement, that those who would learn of him, should, first of all, take his yoke upon them. What guide would undertake to conduct the traveller over the intricate windings, the lofty heights, the deep chasms, and interminable labyrinths, of the Alps, without the tacit agreement, that his direction should be

heeded, and his authority regarded, as final and decisive? What navigator would receive a passenger on board his ship, and undertake to conduct him over the trackless ocean, to a distant port, without the distinct understanding, that his authority was to be regarded, and his knowledge of his calling relied upon? Why then, should it be thought presumption for Christ to assert, or hard for his disciples to submit to his authority? Why should he undertake to lead man up to the knowledge of God, and across the waters of death, to that land, which "eye hath not seen," and yet, be invested with no authority, and allowed to exact no submission from his followers?

But whether it be just, and reasonable, or otherwise, it exists, as a matter of fact, that he requires those who would learn of him, to take his yoke upon them, and to be meek and lowly in heart. He asserted a Divine authority — he taught as one having authority — he paused not, to give his hearers the philosophy of his doctrines, or to force them upon their minds, by dint of fine-spun reasonings: but, he announced

them, as momentous truths, and his reason was, "VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU," it is thus, or so. There was no courting the *patronage* of the wisdom of the world, with him; no effort to show, that his teachings were the decisions of a deep philosophy, nor detail of the process of reasoning, by which he had arrived at the knowledge of them. But he simply announced truth, in its own naked majesty, and left it to rest upon his own authority. Appealing to his works, as the evidence of that authority, he said, "Believe me for my works' sake."

Thus much, I have thought proper to say, upon the subject of the authority of Christ, indicated in the fact, that he requires those who would learn of him, to take his yoke upon them.

I shall spend the remainder of the time allotted to this discourse, in pointing out some of the heavy burdens, from which men are relieved, by coming to Christ; and in illustrating the position, that, "his yoke is easy, and his burden light," so that those who learn of him do, indeed find rest to their souls.

Look for a moment, to the heathen world.

Behold the heart-rending sacrifices, required at their hands, the modes of torture and cruelties of privation, imposed upon them, by their spiritual guides.

Look at the followers of the Arabian prophet; and mark the slavery of soul, to which they are subjected — the constant and irksome privations they must undergo — the multitude of ceremonies they must perform, and the weary pilgrimage to Mecca, that must be made. Look again at the Jews, — the fastings and ablutions, the costly sacrifices, and severe privations, they must undergo. And again, consider the violence to nature, the burdensome rites, the severe penance, and mortifications of the body, which professors of Christianity have sometimes inflicted upon their followers. Nay, fix your attention upon the fact, that, even now, a life of rigor and mortification, which crucifies the warmest and best affections of the heart, is deemed the best evidence of discipleship, and the clearest title to a mansion in the skies. Behold, how often, the professor will say, "Away with your smooth and easy way of getting to heaven!" and how earnestly he will

insist, that the path to the upper world, is one of weary toil, and hard, unattractive labor. Look at all this, and you can hardly fail of perceiving, that there is, in these systems, little of rest to the weary soul, and with emphasis may it be said of the leaders in these matters, as the Saviour said to the Scribes and Pharisees, "Ye bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them upon men's shoulders; but ye, yourselves, will not move them with one of your fingers."

But I pass these things; and I take the duties which are actually required of men, and will attempt to show, that, under some circumstances, and with certain views, the *same thing* may be a heavy burden, which, otherwise, would be a pleasing privilege.

It may be observed, in general, that Christ does not release his followers from the obligation of obedience to the law of God, but, thus much is binding upon all, who follow him. And now, what I wish to say is, that the question, whether this shall be a burden, or a pleasure, must depend entirely upon our views of the law.

If a man believes, that he is bound, on pain of

endless damnation, to keep perfectly the law of God; and at the same time is taught, in the language of the Catechism, that "No mere man, since the fall, has had power to keep the law, but daily doth break it in thought, word, and deed." If he thinks the law requires him, to create within himself, a new heart, and purge out the corruptions of his nature; and yet, believes, that he "can neither amend his depraved nature, nor dispose himself to its amendment;" it is easy to see, that, with these views, the obligation to keep the law, would rest like a heavy burden upon him. But, if we look upon the law as holy, and the commandment as a perfect rule of right, requiring only, that which will promote our best good; and forbidding only, that which is in itself evil, and calculated to do us an injury, — *then*, it is no heavy burden, or galling yoke, to keep the law.

Let us descend to some particulars.

Love to God is the first duty enjoined in the law; and our Saviour, sanctioned, as the first, and greatest of all the commandments, that, which saith, "Thou shalt love, the Lord thy God, with

all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Now, my position is, that this same requirement, which, as made by the Saviour, is easy, and joyous, becomes, in the hands of men, an irksome task, and a burden, grievous to be borne.

It certainly is no hard labor for children to love their parents, when they are kind to them, and do them good. But if the parent is morose and cruel, — if he rules with a rod of iron; neglects to supply the wants of his family, and threatens them with tortures, like those of the inquisition, the children will find it no easy thing to love him; and the obligation to do so, will not permit them to rest. And so in the case before us. It is no hard thing for a man to love God, if he is taught to believe, and does believe, that he is his *friend* and *father;* "the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely;" but, if he believes, that God is the worst and most dangerous enemy of his creatures, from whom they have less to hope, and more to fear, than from all the wicked men and devils in the universe, it will be hard to love him; and the obligation to love,

in this case, will be like a chain of iron upon the neck. The character thus ascribed to God, is such, as if exhibited in man, would create nothing but loathing and utter abhorrence; nor is there any course of reasoning, by which we can persuade ourselves, that it is more lovely in God, than in man.

With such views, one must feel, that he is bound, by solemn ties, sanctioned by the most tremendous penalties, to love that, against which all his better feelings revolt; and which, these feelings and his better judgment, unite in pronouncing worthy only of detestation. Would you be relieved of a burden such as this? Go to him of Nazareth, and you shall find rest, in the assurance, that God is good, immensely and supremely good; and that, you may look up to him, with the confidence of a child in a parent; and rejoicing in the assurance, that he will never leave nor forsake you. He will assure you, that "God feeds the fowls of the air, and clothes the lilies of the field," in garments of beauty, and hush your anxious fears to peaceful rest, by the blessed word, that, "Ye are much better than

they," and more dear and precious in his sight. That there is rest to the soul, in thus loving God, will appear from a moment's reflection.

The great source of inquietude, in our attachments to our friends, is, the fear, that they may forsake us, and the knowledge, that, at some time, we must part. But God is worthy; he will never turn away his love, or separate us from it, but remaineth through endless years the same; and he who has made him, *first* in the devotions of his heart, will find a calm and peaceful rest, in the strong conviction, that even though all else were removed, there would remain to him, what is better than all, even God, his unchangeable friend, and bountiful benefactor.

II. Again, we are required to love our neighbor as ourselves.

In order to do this willingly, and cheerfully, it is necessary to have correct views of our neighbors, in their nature and relations to us.

If our hearts are puffed up with spiritual pride, and we consider ourselves as the peculiar favorites of heaven, and look upon others, as totally depraved children of Satan, hated and rejected

of God, and destined to the companionship of demons, and the torments of hell; we shall not find it an easy thing to love them, and the obligation to do so, if admitted, will be found to be burdensome. To be under the necessity of loving that, which God hates, and which is in itself no more, or better, than a mass of unmingled depravity, is a yoke, galling to the neck. I thank God, that I have no neighbors, who are thus totally depraved, and the objects of his hatred, for I am sure I could not love them.

But there is another view of this subject, worthy of a passing notice. If we could love our fellows with these views of their nature, relations and destiny, that love would afford no rest to the soul, but would be a source of constant annoyance and inquietude; and the more ardently we loved them, the more miserable should we be. Suppose I love my neighbor as myself. I shall feel an interest in his welfare for time and eternity, and can no more rest, when these interests are in jeopardy, than if my own were concerned. Suppose I believe that neighbor, whom I love so well, and whose welfare is so dear to my heart

is destined to writhe in the flames of hell forever. Never could I find rest in that love, for the thought would be painfully insupportable, and would haunt me day and night, like a ghost of despair from a world of sorrow and night. I tell you, it is no pleasing thing to love those of whose well-being we have no hope; and better by far, would it be in such a case, if the heart were petrified and made hard as adamant, than to be softened by love, and probed with fears such as these.

Let those who are weary and heavy ladened with burdens such as these, learn of Christ, and they shall find rest unto their souls. Let them like him, be meek and lowly in heart, esteeming others better than themselves, and look upon their fellow-men as brethren of the same family, children of the same father, and heirs of the same inheritance as themselves. With minds thus enlightened, they can love them with pure hearts fervently; and that love, which before came tardily and reluctantly, as a mere matter of duty, rather than of inclination, will flow freely and spontaneously from the heart; and there will be

rest in the assurance that, what is begun on earth, shall be consummated in heaven, and remain and endure forever. Thus I have shown as I proposed, that even the duties of the Gospel, which are in themselves most delightful and easy, may be so distorted, and perverted, as to become heavy burdens.

There are other burdens more particularly connected with the theory of religion from which Jesus sets us free, and in regard to which he alone can give us rest.

I notice first of all, the fear of death.

"For this purpose was the Son of God manifested that he might destroy death, and him, that hath the power of death, and deliver those who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage."

Nature with all her powers shudders at the thought of laying down in the darkness and silence of the grave; and however much a cold and speculating philosophy may affect indifference, upon the question of future life, yet, there are seasons when that question will force itself upon our attention, with a power that cannot be

resisted. When death puts forth his hand and touches some near and dear companion, of our earthly state; and with hearts heavy ladened with sorrow, we follow the sable hearse to the narrow house appointed for all the living; *then*, the question will come with a solemn and a thrilling power, where now is my companion, my friend, or my child? Must he sleep in everlasting silence in the grave? Must I too, soon go down by his side, and dwell beneath the clods of the valley, in one moonless and starless night of eternal non-existence? These I say, are questions, which will force themselves upon the attention of the most sceptical, and if not satisfactorily answered, they will impose a weary burden upon the soul. Jesus can give rest to those, that learn of him, even upon these the most momentous of all subjects.

He nerves the palsied arm with strength, by displaying the banner of victory over death, upon the mountains of Zion afar. He speaks, and the veil spread over the future is moved away, and the "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, appears;" and the

eye upon which the night of death was settling, becomes radiant with hope, and the tongue breaks out in songs of triumph on the border of the grave.

But it unfortunately happens, that this richest truth of Divine revelation, is so perverted and obscured by error, as to become a source of inquietude. Life is, indeed, sweet, and it might be cheering to learn, that we shall live beyond the grave. But even life itself is, under some imaginable circumstances, a curse. Hence, he whose eye of faith pierces the gloomy veil, only to rest upon the unutterable torments of the damned in hell, is in a far more unenviable condition, than the man who looks upon death as a quiet, but profound and endless sleep. It will not answer to persuade an individual, that so far as his own person is concerned, he is exempt from the rule, which consigns others to the pit of despair. Because, there are ties, which bind us all to friends or kindred, and make us feel, that, in some measure, at least, our interests are identified with theirs. Look you at that mother, in the chamber of sickness. In the darkness of the

silent night, she is watching the fitful slumbers of a dying child. She is a Christian, and for herself she has no fears. But that child, so dear, the light of her eyes and the joy of her heart, *he*, alas! HE IS out of the ark of safety! And as she gazes upon the eye, closing in death, the awful thought will come, more terrible than the yells of the furies, that when next that eye is opened, it will open, not upon a mother's tender form, but upon the fiends of darkness, and the grim demons, that sport in the writhings and contortions of deathless woe. O! what anguish in such a thought! It goes down into the soul more bitter than the dregs of the cup of death, and freezes up every fountain of joy. Poor heart-stricken sufferer, I pity thee! Heavy ladened, art thou indeed, and in vain seeks thy laboring soul for rest! Listen, I pray thee, to that calm, sweet voice, which calls to you to-day as in the days of old, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Thither flee, ye sons and daughters of affliction; ye childless mothers; ye mourning widows; ye fatherless children; ye tempest-

tossed; ye worn and weary, with the battle of life. Look unto him, take his yoke upon you, and learn of him, for he is meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls, for his yoke is easy, and his burden is light.

SERMON XIII.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.

Jesus wept. John 11 : 35.

Among the ancients, there was a sect called Stoics, a distinguishing feature of whose doctrine was, that all outward objects, and circumstances were indifferent, to the truly wise and good. They looked, therefore, with an affected, or real insensibility, upon the sufferings and sorrows of others, and deemed it a mark of weakness, to be affected by the scenes of woe, with which they, in common with all others, were sometimes surrounded. Our blessed Saviour was no stoic, either in theory or practice. In his teachings he enjoins upon his followers a warm and generous sympathy with their fellow-men. He assures them, that they are all brethren of one family, and exhorts them to love one another, with pure hearts fervently. In his view, there was no higher ornament of human nature, than that feel-

ing heart, which wept for others' woes; which entered into the joy of those, who were in prosperity, and shed tears of tenderness with those, who were low down in the vale of adversity. In perfect keeping with his teachings, was his example, in this respect. He felt for others' woes, and there was no form of human suffering, which did not find in him compassion and relief. He mingled his tears feelingly, and freely, with those that were bowed down with sorrow; and thus, by his example, not less than his precept, he sought to nurture and cherish the kindly sympathies of our nature, and train us up, in the letter and spirit of that command, which enjoins it upon us to "Rejoice, with those that do rejoice, and weep, with those that weep."

This is one of the most beautiful and precious features of the Gospel, and the most endearing and captivating attribute of its author. In no light does he appear so inexpressibly glorious, or so infinitely precious, as when we contemplate him, touched with feelings of sympathy and compassion for our sorrows, and affected, even unto tears, by the sufferings of the afflicted. We may

look upon him as the messenger sent from God to save a world, clothed in all power in heaven and on earth. We may hear him utter the authoritative mandate, at which, the sick are healed, the lepers are cleansed, the blind eyes are opened, the deaf ears are unstopped, the lame leap as an hart, the dead are awakened from the sleep of death, and the heaving billows of the sea are hushed, and made smooth as a polished mirror. We may witness all this, by an eye of faith, and while we are astonished at the displays of his mighty power, we may feel assured that, in such an arm, we may safely trust. So, we may see him, as he goes in triumph to Jerusalem, amid the shouts and hosannas of the multitude; and glory in the thought, that he is our Lord and Master. We may behold him upon the cross, pouring out his blood for the world, and praying for his murderers, even in the agonies of a cruel death; and well may we thank God, that he was thus faithful to the work, given him to perform. We may see him again, in the glory of his resurrection power, with the laurels of a victory over death, fresh and green, upon his brow. He

ascendeth on high, leading captivity captive, and in due time, shall put down all rule, all authority and power — all thrones and dominions shall serve and obey him, and the vast universe of intelligent beings, shall cast their crowns before him, and meekly bow at his feet. All this may we see, but the soul is awed to silence, and the mental vision is dazzled by the very magnificence and glory of the unearthly spectacle. We gaze upon it, as upon some stupendous drama, which passes, all gorgeous and splendid before our eyes, and perhaps, too keenly feel, that its leading character is not of earth, but exalted high above all our aspirations — too high, indeed, to be unto us, a pattern, or exemplar.

But when from these vast, and wonderful displays of a Saviour's glory, we turn to the simple and unpretending history of the text, we perceive, that we have again come down to the earth, and that, we are contemplating scenes, which come home to the "business and the bosoms" of men, in the common and familiar relations of human life.

In the little town of Bethany, there was an

obscure and humble individual, named Lazarus, having two sisters, called Mary and Martha, who, in the absence of a father, looked upon their brother with great tenderness of affection, and confided in him, as their earthly counsellor, and protector. But that brother, so dear, fell sick and died; and in much sorrow, and with many tears, they had deposited his remains in the tomb. So severe was their affliction, and so desolate their condition, that their friends and neighbors had assembled, according to the custom of the times, to weep with them, and comfort them.

At that time, Jesus and his disciples drew near to Bethany, and Martha ran out to meet him, on his approach, and to impart the sad tidings of the death of her brother. She returned and said to her sister, "The Master cometh and calleth thee." Then Mary also ran out to meet him, and fell at his feet saying — "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." And when Jesus saw the anguish of her soul, and beheld also, the Jews, who were standing with her weeping, he was troubled in spirit, and said, "Where have ye laid him?" And they said, "Come and

see;" and "Jesus wept." Here we recognize the beauty and glory of his character. He feels as man should feel. The weeping mourners are around him, their hearts smitten with grief, and their tears falling fast and freely. He hears their sighs — he listens to the audible bursting forth of their grief — his soul is melted in sympathy, and he wept with them. It is needless to add, that in this case, as in others, he put forth his hand for their relief; and in a moment, he who had exhibited the tenderness of his sympathies in being affected to tears, by the sorrow of those around him, uttered his voice, in the majesty and the power of God, saying, "Lazarus, come forth," and he that was dead heard, and was made alive. Grand and sublime was the spectacle, when death yielded up his prey, and the dead came forth in the habiliments of the grave, to cheer that weeping throng, and with his own living hand to wipe the tears from the eyes of his heart-stricken sisters. But more touching, more dear and precious to the soul, is the fact, that the strange and wonderful being, who stands before us, clothed with the power over life and

death, has nevertheless a human heart, with all its best and holiest sympathies; and that, he too, can weep, and mingle his tears with those of poor suffering man. We may adore the wonders of his power; but most, should we love the tenderness of his compassion; for there breathes the truth, that he is "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh," and, that, we have indeed, "a merciful High Priest, who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities."

Nor is this a solitary instance, where his spirit of tenderness was manifested. On a certain occasion he came nigh to the sea of Galilee, and went up into a mountain. His fame, had gone abroad, and great multitudes followed him. There were the sick, faint and dying, who had come to be healed, and the lame waiting for relief. And there were the blind, who had groped their way out to the desert, faintly hoping, that a word from the wonderful stranger, of whom they had heard, might light upon their sightless eyeballs, and introduce them to the unknown beauties of a world, in which they had lived, but, which had been to them, one perpetual

night, without a star. And there was the leper; a loathsome being, cast out from the synagogue, and shunned by his fellows; and he had followed in the distance, and feared, while he hoped, that he might be cleansed. And there were the mourners, the widows and the fatherless children, drawn by an irresistible impulse, to hear from the God-sent messenger, the words of eternal life. And there stood that great throng, swaying to and fro, as the agitated waters of the ocean, jostling each other in the crowd, and waiting with eager eyes, and open ears, to see the far-famed Nazarene, or, to catch the distant sound of that voice, which could comfort the sorrowful, give eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, ears to the deaf, health to the sick, and life to the dead. So wonderful were his works, that the time flew on apace, and ere they were aware, they had been with him three days.

When Jesus looked around, upon that vast throng, and saw them, as lost sheep having no shepherd, he turned to his disciples and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, for they continue with me, now, three days, and have

nothing to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way." Here, as in our text, we may see the fact manifested, that Jesus was no stoic; but that, his heart was alive to human wants and sufferings, and his hand, ever ready, to afford relief.

There is another incident recorded of him, which illustrates this same feature of his character. He came and drew near to Jerusalem, that great city, where his enemies were congregated, and ready to take his life; and as he surveyed it, in its pride, and pomp, and wealth, and wickedness, and knew that judgment was even then, gathering like a dark cloud, and would soon descend, in one terrible storm, upon the devoted city, he stood there, and wept over it, for he was moved with compassion, and said, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How oft would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not."

Thus did Christ manifest his sympathy with the dangers and sufferings of his bitter enemies; and to me, these evidences of a Saviour's interest in the welfare of humanity, and of communion

with all its woes, are among the most precious jewels in his life and ministry. Casually as they appear to be named, and incidentally, as they were presented; yet, without them, his character would have been incomplete. He might, indeed have appeared glorious in his power, and adorable in his goodness, and rich in his wisdom. Nevertheless, there would have been something wanting, to link him to our hearts, and bring him near to our souls. That something, is furnished in the accounts given of his warm and generous sympathy with all our sufferings, and all our wants. True, he is still high, and lifted up, but he hears our faintest cries of distress, and not a sorrow, or a tear, escapes his notice.

It seems proper to remark here, that, Jesus never wept for himself. He was truly "a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief." He came, a stranger upon earth. Born to an inheritance of poverty; though the birds had their nests, and the foxes had holes, "the Son of man had not where to lay his head." He was persecuted and reviled, buffeted by the world, derided and

insulted of men, and lived in the midst of scenes of misery, which would have made an ordinary man bewail his hard fate, and complain of the evils, he suffered. But nothing of this do we hear from him. On the contrary, he meekly bowed his head, and patiently endured the fiercest storms of the world's wrath, without a murmur, or a complaint. Self was forgotten, in his absorbing love for man. His own sorrows were buried in the silence of his own breast, and all his sympathies were absorbed in pity for the woes of others. The cruel ingratitude and inveterate malice of the world — the scourge, the crown of thorns, the sweat of Gethsemane, the agony and blood of Calvary and its cross, could not draw a tear from his eyes; for these were his own sufferings. But he wept for the woes of others. His heart melted, and he shed tears of sympathy with those, that wept around him. While, for himself, he could suffer and endure, and lean with confidence and cheerful hope upon the arm of his father, God; yet, for others, he was moved with compassion, and subdued, even to tears.

It may not be improper to remark further, that the kind and blessed Master wept over the *actual sufferings* of man, on earth, rather than their prospective woes, in another world. At the grave of Lazarus, there is no evidence, that he wept in view of the future and eternal condition of his friend. But he saw the Jews weeping at his side, and Mary and Martha, with scathed and smitten spirits, bewailing the loss of one, whose image was dear to their hearts; and it was these actual and present sufferings, which opened the deep fountains of his sympathetic nature, and bathed his cheeks in tears. And so in the case of Jerusalem. He stood where he could behold that great city, with all its thronging multitudes of inhabitants, and knew full well, that the day of its desolation was at hand. The elements of deep feeling were stirred within him, and he wept over it. But, there is no reason for the belief, that his sympathy was excited by a far-distant view of the tremendous woes, that awaited the people in the future and eternal world. On the contrary, he gives us the cause of his sorrow, in these words, — "For the days

shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in, on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children with thee, and they shall not leave in thee, one stone upon another." This it was, that made him weep over the devoted city. And so, in the case of the multitude: his compassion was moved, and his sympathy enlisted, not by seeing them exposed to the vengeance of God, in a far-distant world; but because he saw them suffering in the present.

They had been with him three days in the wilderness, without food. He knew, that many of them came from afar, and were already weary and faint, and if he sent them away fasting, they would fall by the way. For this cause, he had compassion upon them, and fed them.

I am led to these remarks, because they present the Saviour in bold relief, as practically, and entirely opposed to that Stoicism, which I named in the beginning of this discourse, which regards with indifference the outward sufferings of man, deeming them unworthy of notice; as also, to

that view of the Divine economy, which begets a practical apathy to present evils, by magnifying, and gazing with absorbing interest upon the ideal woes of another world. The truth is, the Saviour ever practised upon his own precept, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

I am deeply impressed with the conviction, that, it is far different with the world; and that, from the beginning, men's sympathies have been far more moved by contemplation upon those evils, which have been anticipated in the future, than by proper attention to the actual sufferings of their fellow-men, on earth; and that, they have been more solicitous to save from the former, than to weep over, and relieve the latter.

Man has often been denounced, as hard-hearted and unfeeling; as having no sympathies or tears for the sufferings of his fellow-man; and I will not say, that these denunciations have been altogether without foundation in truth. But, I venture to plead in behalf of human nature, that it has ever possessed and manifested, more of sympathy, than its traducers are willing to grant. The difficulty lies, not entirely, in man's want

of feeling, or interest in the welfare of his kindred race; but in another, and oft-neglected truth, that his sympathies have been perverted, and drawn away from the real evils of this world, to expend and waste themselves upon the expected torments of another mode of existence. The entire history of the religious efforts of the world, is but an illustration of this fact. The whole race has been excited to strong and vigorous efforts, in every age. They have offered victims upon a thousand altars. They have built temples, whose domes went up among the clouds. They have submitted to privations and hardships, not a few. They have toiled incessantly, and with a martyr's zeal. They have poured out their silver and gold, and even their blood, like water; and have expended enough of labor and substance, to have banished the evils of poverty, want, and ignorance from the face of the earth; and to have dried up, once and forever, the deepest, and bitterest fountains of human suffering.

Even, at the present hour, the sympathy of man for man, is active and strong. All over the civilized world, the devotees of religion are en-

gaged, rearing costly temples, devoting mines of wealth, and an incredible amount of time and toil, to the good of man. Sympathy for humanity is an important element in the power, that moves to these efforts. But, unfortunately, that sympathy is invoked in favor of the far-distant woes of the future, rather than the real evils of the present; and is employed in devising, and executing means for escaping the one, rather than relieving the other. Everywhere, man weeps as Jesus wept, but not for the same cause. He wept for the present, while man weeps for the future, and so freely do the tears flow over it, that there are few to spare, for the actual, and every-day sufferings of human life. I do not say, that the religious efforts, of the world, are entirely barren or unfruitful, in regard to present suffering, or, that they relieve none of it. But what I wish to say is, that this is but an incidental matter, while the great leading object, has been to save from the tremendous woes of another world. And this has absorbed human sympathy, and human effort, in all ages.

I hail it, however, as one of the most auspi-

cious signs of the times, that the sympathies of our race, are beginning in some degree, to flow in the channel, indicated by the example of the Master. This is an age of benevolent effort, and if there is not more of sympathy for man, in the present, than in any previous age, it is at least true, that more of it is devoted to the relief of present suffering, and to the melioration of the condition of man, on earth.

Man now weeps for the ignorance of his brother, and he establishes the school, the seminary, or the college; and rears an institution of learning, at every door; where even the poor and the needy may freely drink, at the fountains of knowledge. He sees his brother in oppression, and bondage, and he puts forth a strong hand to deliver the down-trodden, and give liberty to the world. He pities the sick, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, and the insane, and he builds an institution, where they can dwell in comparative comfort, and happiness. And so, all around us, there are rising institutions and combinations, for the relief of every kind and form of human misery; and the great heart of humanity beats with

new interest, in the sufferings of the world; and its strong arm is toiling earnestly, under the discovery, that there is hope for man, even on earth. Goodly prospects portend the time approaching, when the human soul shall be so baptized in the spirit of the Divine Master, that, it shall have a tear for every woe, and a hand to offer relief, to every want. Then, shall earth's sorrows be mitigated, if not entirely relieved. Meantime, let us remember, that Jesus is our great example; and that the more tender our sympathies, and the more ready we are, to weep with those that weep, the more do we partake of his spirit, and the better is our claim to the title of his followers. Only, let that spirit be in us and abound —let it extend abroad from heart to heart, from neighborhood to neighborhood; from city to city, from nation to nation, until it has pervaded, and sanctified every soul; and then, shall Christ's kingdom be triumphant, his empire complete, and earth be paradise again. He, who wept shall weep no more, for the morning of an effulgent day shall have succeeded to the night of our sorrows.

SERMON XIV.

THE TRUE MODE OF CHRISTIAN EFFORT.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. MATT. 5: 16.

THE religion of Jesus Christ inculcates the utmost frankness and candor, as important duties. It everywhere, and always, reprobates hypocrisy and concealment, as among the lowest and most guilty vices. It does not, indeed, urge men rashly to engage in its defence, or to go thoughtlessly into its profession, "as the horse rusheth into the battle." On the contrary, it requires every man to sit down and "count the cost," before he begins to build. It demands an investigation, and asks us to embrace it with the understanding and the heart. And the man who hesitates to avow, or fears to act upon his faith, it compares to the foolish one, who should light a candle and hide it under a bushel, so that its light might not be seen. Thus, does it set the

seal of its disapprobation upon all attempts at concealment.

The Divine Master went even further than this, and taught his followers, that all attempts to compromise the matter, and make concord between his Gospel and the wisdom of the world, would be vain and fruitless. The world was dark, and he came as a "bright and shining light." Between this light, and that darkness, there could be no agreement. Where the light shines, the darkness must flee away. "No man can serve two masters, for either he will love the one and hate the other, or else, he will hold to one, and despise the other." Hence the propriety, and the necessity, that every man should distinctly and honestly place himself upon one side, or the other, and openly avow the master whom he intends to serve.

In attempting to make an application of the principle of the text to the present, it is proper to say, in the outset, that there is yet remaining in the world, much of moral and spiritual darkness. The false doctrines, and corrupt practices of the past, have come down to us through the

revolving ages, and the clear light of gospel truth and duty, is but dimly seen, by many, and entirely unseen, by vast multitudes of the human race. If, indeed, this Gospel is the true light of the world, and if Divine wisdom has ordained, that it shall be spread abroad, in any degree, by human agency, or human effort; then is it manifestly the duty of every man, in whose soul the candle of the Lord has been lighted, to take the best means in his power, to let that light shine upon the darkness with which he is surrounded. Our duty in the premises, being plain, and, as I judge, indisputable, I shall make it the main object of this discourse, to consider the instrumentalities, which are appropriate to the most faithful and efficient discharge of the obligation here imposed.

There are several ways in which, every believer in Christ's Gospel may aid in spreading its blessed light abroad, among his fellow-men. Of these I name —

I. An open profession of the Christian faith.

This is the first, and most obvious step to be taken, by any man, who would engage in the

propagation, or defence, of any system of truth, or duty. And that man, who thinks to advance the interests of any honest enterprise, by concealing his convictions, and fleeing from the responsibility of an open avowal of his faith, is not less foolish, than, if he should attempt to enlighten the darkness of the midnight hour, by lighting a candle, and concealing it under a bushel. As well may you contend, that Peter was faithfully serving his Master, and advancing his cause, when he denied him, and profanely asserted, that he knew not the man; as to pretend, that any other man is doing his whole duty, as a Christian, while he conceals his convictions, and refuses to take upon himself the name, and the open and fearless profession of the Master's cause. In all the examples and teachings of the Saviour, there is nothing to justify the idea, that he desired or countenanced the propagation of his religion, by stealth, or hypocrisy. On the contrary, with him, everything was open, and above-board. He boldly uttered the truth, in all its fulness, never seeking to please the bigots, with whom he was surrounded,

by attempting to pass for one of their own number. He sought not, even to make the difference between his religion, and the popular systems of that day, appear less than it really was. But, with the utmost frankness, he proclaimed his Gospel, and everywhere, avowed his adherence to its sublime and heart-cheering truths.

The same honesty and boldness he required of his followers. He demanded that they should "confess him before men," and assured them, that whoever would not thus confess him, was not his disciple. On the contrary, of those who were ashamed to confess him, would he, also, be ashamed. And when he sent out his disciples to preach, he sent them openly, and in his own name, and promised the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the gift of miracles, only, to those who went in that name.

The fearful, and the hypocritical, might attempt to spread the Gospel by stealth, and by concealing its identity, until the day of their death, and there is no blessing promised upon their labors. But, to those, who were not ashamed of the Gospel, nor afraid to proclaim it, in the name of its

Divine Author, the promise was, that he would be with them to bless them, and they should be "endued with power from on high."

There is a worldly policy in vogue, which seeks to become all things to all men, in a sense widely different from that, in which the apostle used the phrase. It repudiates all names, as indicative of the character of any system; and, accommodating itself to the prejudices of the men of every creed, seeks, insensibly to infuse into their hearts the principles of the Gospel, and thus, to make them Christians, ere they are aware, that they have departed from the landmarks of their ancient faith.

And then, again, there are others, who would receive and cherish the Gospel, in the silence and secrecy of their own hearts. It is enough for them, that they believe in Christ; to confess him they are afraid, or ashamed. In the private circle, and in the presence of friends, they can profess faith in the Lord Jesus, and great attachment to his cause; but in the world, they choose to pass in the crowd — to be numbered with the mass of mankind, and to avoid every act, by which they

shall stand committed to the cause of Christ, or identified with those who bear his name.

Why men should adopt a policy of this sort, in religion, it is not easy to determine; for surely, no honest man thinks of pursuing such a course, in any other matter of importance. In science, the man who would advance its cause, comes out as its advocate. In philosophy, the propounder of a new system, openly avows his object, and those who receive his theory, declare their convictions of its truth, and labor to propagate it among men. And so, in the political world. If a man receives the doctrines, and cherishes the principles of any of the great parties, which from time to time arise, he thinks not to advance his views by shrinking from all responsibility, and refusing to be numbered with, or called by the name of the party, whose interests he would advance. But, he comes out openly, and gives his labors, his means, his name, and whatever of influence he possesses, to the advancement of the principles he has embraced.

So should it be in religion; and, to say nothing of the real impolicy of a contrary course, it is cer-

tain, that, it finds no countenance from the precept, or the example of Christ. He would have every man let his light shine before the world, and confess, with his lips, what his heart believes.

II. Another means of causing the light of Gospel truth and duty to prevail, is an individual life of strict conformity to the temper and spirit of the Saviour.

This is the best and surest test, of the truthfulness of men's professions. Many there are, who will say, Lord, Lord, and be long and loud in their professions of attachment to his religion. But these are not always the words of truth and soberness. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments," said the Saviour; and here, is indicated the fact, that fealty to the laws of Jesus, is the true test of love for him. An open avowal of faith, is, indeed, demanded by the commonest honesty, from every man, who truly believes; and such an avowal is calculated to give strength, and influence to the cause of truth. But the question, whether that profession is sincere, or otherwise, must, after all, be decided by the life

of the man. No faith is inert, or devoid of influence upon the conduct. Least of all, is the faith of the Gospel dead, powerless, or inoperative. On the contrary, it is compared to leaven, which diffuses itself through the whole lump, with which it is brought in contact. If this faith dwells truly, in the heart, it will show its fruits, in the life; and hence, where these fruits are not found, we are warranted in the conclusion, that the faith is wanting. And whatever the profession may say, we must ultimately judge the tree by its fruits, and thus arrive at the real truth in the case.

Let it be remembered, then, that the most effectual argument, which can be offered in favor of the religion of Christ, lies in the consistent, the correct, the actively benevolent, lives of its professors. The truth may be proclaimed in all its power, and with a cogency of argument, which no sophistry can evade, and, that it will ultimately prevail, I doubt not. But it must be *lived*, as well as preached; and we may be well assured, its progress will be slow, and its triumph far distant, unless it is commended to men's hearts and

consciences, by a well-ordered life, and virtuous conversation, on the part of those who believe.

It is not claiming too much, to say, that the Gospel has been, and can be, defended by arguments whose force cannot be evaded. But its strength is not there. It is comparatively a small matter, that it can be defended and enforced, by dint of the soundest modes of reasoning. But let us see its believers, ardent and devoted, their lives harmless and blameless, and their hearts purified from all evil; and I will point to them, and say, These are the witnesses, whose testimony cannot be impeached, and whose influence cannot be resisted. Thus, can each, and every one of us, commend our most holy faith to the world; for whether we know it or not, we are really strong only in virtue, and prosperous only, when we are progressing in virtue and righteousness.

III. We may promote the cause of Christianity by union and concert of action, and by organized and systematic effort.

I have no peculiar feeling in favor of building up a sect, or party, in religion. But the differ-

ence between our faith, and that of the popular religionists of the day, is so wide and radical, that I see not how we can consistently amalgamate with any of the prevailing sects; or how we can avoid the necessity of a distinct and separate organization. I care, indeed, but little for the success of any sect, merely as a sect. But I do care much, for the success of the holy and blessed truths of the Gospel. If these could prevail, and spread their hallowed influences abroad — if they could go, with all their healing power, into the hearts of the sinful and wandering, to call them back to God — if they could reach the poor, the afflicted, the widow and the fatherless, the desponding, the sick, and the dying, and give them good hope, and everlasting consolation through faith — if they could be sent home to the souls of the morally dead, to awaken them to new life; and bring forth abundantly of fruits to bless the poor and needy, without the organization of a sect, or denomination; I should be satisfied, if every denominational organization were blotted out. But it cannot be done. It was never known, that any system was spread far and wide,

in the midst of opposition, without united and systematic effort. The early advocates of the religion of Christ came out from the body of the people, and formed a distinct sect. Under their own banner, they went into the contest for principle and duty; and, in their own way, they worshipped the God of their fathers, and strove together for the faith of the Gospel. And thus, by giving form and body to Christianity, and concert and harmony to their efforts, they caused the light to penetrate the darkness, by which they were surrounded, and went on to triumphant success.

So the reformers, who rose up and labored to scatter the darkness, which had been, for ages, accumulating in the Church, knew the power of united action. They sought not to conceal their light, but to let it shine. For this purpose, they united their efforts, and concentrated their power, for the promotion of the interests of that blessed cause, in which they were engaged. And so it has been with all great revolutions. Their advocates have stood out boldly; and they have

been accomplished, not by isolated, or fragmentary, but by united and concentrated efforts.

The present age is peculiar, in this respect. The great truth, that union is strength, is better understood, and more generally applied to all the enterprises of men, than in any previous age. Never has there been a period, when the principle of associated action — that mighty power, akin to Omnipotence itself — has been so generally developed, or so universally adopted. On every side, combinations are formed for purposes, social, benevolent, political, moral and religious, and are devoting their mighty energies to the ends proposed. Dissolve these combinations — strike down these organized bodies — and throw the great reforms, to which they are devoted, back, to depend upon the labors of isolated individuals, and they will all languish, if they do not actually die.

Let any man reflect, for one moment, upon the circumstances to which we have alluded, and he will clearly perceive, that the Christian Church cannot hope for much success, without a thorough and efficient organization. As well might a pro-

miscuous multitude expect to contend successfully, without arms, or a commander, against a well-organized army of disciplined soldiers.

But if it is important, that the Church should be so organized as to present a solid phalanx, powerful for good, it is still more important, that its energies should be properly directed, and devoted to the true works of the Master. I take it, that the same law, which binds the individual man, has equal claims upon the great body of the Church; and if the former is bound to let his light so shine before men, that they may see his GOOD WORKS; the latter cannot plead an exemption from the binding obligation of that law. The Church, not less than the individual, is bound to engage in good works; and that is a poor and miserable apology for a church organization, which does not devote itself to this end, and provide, in a regular and systematic manner, for the discharge of the practical duties of the Gospel.

And here I am reminded of, what I can but regard, as a radical, and I had almost said, fatal defect, in the organic structure of the mass of Churches, at the present moment—a defect which

may be traced, perhaps, to a recoil from the ecclesiastical tyranny of former ages; and which, in its anxiety to avoid domination, and secure liberty, has gone very near the opposite extreme, of anarchy; and thus divested the body of Christ of half its power for good. Who has seen, or who now sees, the good works of our Churches, as such? What are they organized for, and what good works do they propose, or pretend to perform? The solemn truth is, they have done little, or nothing, in the field of active benevolence. They have contented themselves with announcing theories, and disseminating dogmas. They have busied themselves in tinkering creeds, in defining what is orthodoxy; and in hunting out heresy, with keenest scent, and preserving the standard of faith from innovation. But, the paramount duties of the Gospel — the practical works of benevolence — feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked — visiting the sick, and those that are in prison; — *these* all-important duties, which form the basis, on which the Divine Master judges who are, and who are not, his disciples, enter not into the category of things to be

done, by the Church. These are all left to be performed, if at all, by the disjointed and fragmentary efforts of individual men and women, as time and chance may determine, guided by no system, and directed to no general end. May I not ask again, Who sees the good works of the Churches, and is thereby led to glorify our Father who is in heaven? Where are the poor they have blessed — the hungry they have fed — the naked they have clothed — the sick they have visited — the prisoner, whose lonely cell has been cheered — the widows and orphans, whose hearts have been made to sing for joy? I speak not of the individual members of our Churches, and of their works, in this respect, for I know the kind in heart are everywhere. But I speak of the Churches, in their capacity as organized bodies of professing Christians; and, as such, I say, they are awfully barren and unfruitful, in these the true works of the Master. I willingly believe, the difficulty is not in the hearts of the people; for in any of our Churches, there is enough of the spirit of Christ, to labor in the field of Gospel duty, and do deeds, on earth, that angels might admire in heaven;

and which men might regard as the brightest evidences of the glory of God, in his earthly Zion. But the error is in the fact, that, this benevolence has not been called out, to regular and systematic action. The Church has done what it has proposed to do, and I will not say, it has not done it well. But the truth is, it has not proposed to do the good works, in which its highest energies ought always to be engaged. Indirectly, no doubt, the Church has done much good. It has fostered the kind and tender sympathies of the human heart. It has preserved the worship of God, and moulded the hearts of the people, in some measure, into the spirit and temper of Christ. And with hearts thus prepared, they have gone out into the world, and done something of good. But they have labored under all the disadvantages of isolation; and have felt, that the evils to be remedied were as mountains, which they could not remove.

It is, in my judgment, time that all those, who believe the Gospel of Jesus, should determine to "let their light shine," through all the means I have indicated — through an open profession of

the religion of Christ — an individual life of practical conformity to its spirit; and united, concentrated and systematic efforts for the furtherance of the great ends of the Gospel.

Thus of individuals, and then the Churches should rise and shake themselves from the dust, and go, in good earnest, about the Master's business. The great works of practical benevolence, so imperatively demanded, by the letter, and the spirit of the Gospel of Christ, should no longer be left, to individual effort, to be done, or undone, as chance may determine; but they should enter into the first and highest objects of the organic structure of the body of the Church. They should be made matters of regular and systematic labor; and to them should be applied all the superior, and accumulated energies of the social compact. The man who enters the Church should feel, that his strength is thereby increased; that he has there, a kind foster-mother, who will stand by him in the day of his calamity, and sustain him when his strength fails. He should understand, moreover, that, there is opened to him, a new field of benevolent effort, and that, he

is therein, furnished with facilities, which will render his labors of love doubly effectual.

When our Churches shall be thus organized, and their strength expended in efforts, for the melioration of suffering humanity, then shall their light shine, clear as the sun; and men shall see their good works and glorify their Father who is in heaven; and Zion shall put on her beautiful garments and rejoice in the abundance of her prosperity.

SERMON XV.

GOD OUR STRENGTH.

The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. PSALM 18: 2.

HUMAN life is, at best, but a chequered scene of sorrow and of joy. Many ills and dangers are unavoidably incident to this frail state of mortality, and through them we must make our way; and no man may expect to pass them, without feeling their power to annoy, if not, positively to injure.

Such is the fixed and unalterable decree of Heaven, and it cannot be reversed. We may dream of Utopian fields, where sorrows never come; and speculate of realms on earth, where our pathway will be strewed with flowers, without a thorn, and where the bright skies shall be without a cloud. And this may answer well for poetry or fiction. But when we come to deal with matters of fact, in sober prose, we must open

our eyes upon the stubborn truth, that we are compassed about with many infirmities, — that we are beset with temptations, sorrows and sufferings; and that, many stern conflicts must be endured in this imperfect world. It is of no use to talk in a different strain, for the *fact* is written upon the history of the world, and engraved upon every page of human experience.

Hence arises the necessity of a prudent foresight, to provide against the evil day, and to seek some rock of defence, some shield or buckler, or some strong tower of safety, to which we can flee, when the battle rages, and foes press heavily upon us. When the mariner is about to sail for a distant land, he prudently calculates upon the dangers that await him. He knows, that the trackless ocean, with its heaving waves and boisterous winds, is before him; and to the best of his ability, provides the means of meeting every emergency. And so, when a city is menaced by the arm of war; the inhabitants prepare to abide the conflict. Their valiant men are trained in the arts of war, until they are strong; the sword and the buckler are made

ready; the walls of adamant are strengthened, and the towers and fortresses are made still more impregnable; so that, when sword and spear fail, a retreat may be found in their fastnesses. And so ought men to do when entering upon the voyage of life; and when threatened by the enemies, that await them, and the dangers, that stand thick through all the way. The voice of wisdom cries, loudly, for every man to gird on his sword, to take his shield and buckler and prepare for the conflict; and not only so, but to provide some rock or tower, to which he can flee for refuge when worn with the toil, or faint with the heat of the great battle of life.

I know there is an idea in the world, that man's destinies are so much the sport of fortune, or chance, or so moulded by an iron fate, that he had better sit him down, and bare his unprotected and unsheltered head to the "peltings" of the storm, and wait, with all the fortitude he can command, the unforeseen issue of events, which he cannot control. And I grant, that, the ultimate destinies of men are controlled by a higher power, and that, many of the ills, and dangers of

life are unavoidable. But, it should be remembered, that he who shapes these destinies, works always, by appropriate means, and agencies; and the fact, that perils and dangers cannot be avoided; instead of affording an argument for supineness, and inactivity, is in itself the best reason, for a sleepless vigilance in preparing to meet them. To us, storms and tempests, and all the changes and vicissitudes of the weather are unavoidable. Spite of all, our power, come they *must*, and come they *will*. But who thence infers, that he has nothing to do, but sit down and meet the storm, and abide the heat and cold? Nay, but the very fact, that they are *unavoidable*, is the best possible reason why, we should prepare a shelter and a shade.

And so, of the ills of life. Many of them we cannot avoid, and therefore it is, that we should seek an antidote; prepare ourselves with strength to endure them, and with a rock of safety when they come.

The text tells us where that antidote, that strength, and that rock may be found. It is in God. There the poor, the afflicted and needy,

the worn, the faint and weary, find strength, comfort, and a safe retreat when the battle waxes hot around them. The figures here employed are peculiarly emphatic and strong. The idea is, that of a battle, and the imagery is suited to every emergency. God is set forth as the rock of defence; the strength of the arm; the buckler; the deliverer; the horn of salvation, and the strong tower of safety; and without entering into an illustration, in detail, it sufficeth for our present purpose to say, that all this imagery is designed to present a lively idea, of perfect safety in God, to those who trust in him; and that, he may be relied upon for support and protection, in all the dangers and difficulties of life.

It is sometimes objected to the religion of God, that the proofs of its excellency and Divine power, are far-fetched and theoretical, rather than tangible and real; and it is precisely upon this point, that I desire the labor of this discourse to bear.

I shall, therefore, attempt to show you, that the spirit of the text, as applied, not only to its author, but also to all, who are like him, is not mere *theory*, but *fact* solid and substantial. The

infidel may laugh, and despise the religion of the Bible, with all its hopes and joys, and call it fiction or fanaticism; but, if he will open his eyes, he shall see, in the history of the world, and in ten thousand facts around him, this truth most plainly manifest; that God has been, and is, to his creatures, all the text declares him to be, or to have been, to the Psalmist.

Take if you please, in the first place, the evils of poverty and destitution of physical comfort; and see, what strength those who endure them, gather from their confidence in God. The rich and the prosperous are prone to forget their dependence upon the Most High, and to refuse the consolations of his holy word. But the poor, and those who are in circumstances of outward distress, are constantly reminded of their own helplessness, and compelled to seek strength and support from God. Nor do they seek in vain. The fountain is always full, and its streams never run dry. The religion of God, is emphatically the religion of the poor and needy. It comes to them, in the midst of their privations, and wants, and bids them hope for riches in heaven, where

moth and rust doth not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal; and promises an inheritance there, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.

When the messengers came to Christ, and desired to know whether he was the Messiah; among the evidences of his Divine mission, we find this brief, but comprehensive sentence, "The poor have the Gospel preached unto them."

This was one of its peculiar characteristics: it was adapted to the condition, and suited to the wants of the poor and lowly. He passed by the opulent, and the great, as less needy, that he might go to the poor and distressed, and give them of the riches of that truth, which is bread to the hungry, and cool water to the thirsty soul. He proclaimed there, the great truth, that we have all in heaven, a father, who careth for us; and that, he will faithfully stand by us, and defend us, when all other friends fail. Yea, we are all, high and low, rich and poor, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, to an inheritance, that endureth forever. And how peculiarly well calculated are doctrines like these, to meet the

wants of those, who are struggling in the low vale of poverty! When the griping hand of want is upon us, our earthly stores are gone, and there is no kind hand to relieve our wants, how joyful is the thought, that we have a Father, above, who is richer than all; and that, he has graciously made us heirs of the countless treasures of an immortal life! How consoling the reflection, that the time draweth nigh, when we shall come in possession of the inheritance thus bequeathed to us, by our father, God! And better yet; enriching us will not in the least impoverish our fellow-creatures, for there is enough for all; and though the heirs of this heavenly estate, are as numerous as the sons and daughters of Adam, yet, not one of them shall be turned away empty. In yonder blessed mansions above, "the rich and the poor shall meet together," with the angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect; the beggar and the prince shall stand upon one common level of pensioners upon the rich grace of God, and go no more out, but the Lamb shall feed them, and God himself shall be with them.

Now, call this fiction, or fable, if you will, but, it is evident, upon the face of it, that such views meet the wants of the struggling poor; and that, through them, God becomes the "strength of the needy in their distress," and the only rock upon which they can stand securely, amid the waves that roll, and threaten to overwhelm them.

I ask the rankest infidel that lives, to go and visit the abodes of the humble and virtuous poor, whose trust is in the Lord; and mark the influence exerted upon trustful and devout hearts, amid the wreck of all earthly hopes, and then see if faith and hope in God are useless. It is an humble abode, affording but a poor shelter from the winter's wind. In that lowly cot, are gathered parents and children, brothers and sisters; their clothing scant and poor, their fare of the coarsest kind. Perhaps, the last fire emits its feeble blaze upon the hearth-stone, and the last morsel of bread is upon the homely board; and where the supply for the morrow is to be found, God only knows. But peace and hope are there. The prattling children lisp their little joys, and the father breathes his prayer and his praises to

God. He retires to his rest, and sleeps sweetly in his trustful hope, that he who hears the raven when he cries, and suffers not the sparrow to fall, without his notice, will not leave or forsake him; and in the morning he goes to his toil without a murmuring word. This is no fancy sketch, but it is drawn from life; and I hazard nothing in saying the veriest infidel that lives, has looked upon its likeness, and is fully aware, that you can find in the midst of scenes like this, calmer, and more contented minds, and purer and serener joy, than often dwell in the palaces of the rich. May I ask for the reason? What is it, that sustains the soul and makes life comfortable, and even calm and joyful, where your philosophy and mine, would fail, and leave us in dark despair? There is but one answer, that can be given. It is hope — hope beaming from the fair face of the Lord's anointed, and shedding a mild and cheerful radiance upon the night of human want and human woe. God is their refuge and their strength. In him do they trust with an unfaltering confidence, and this is the secret of the whole matter. This, it is, that affords the true

reason of that resignation and peace, which shines out from the most dreary abodes of poverty and want, I do not say always, but certainly full often. Call it a delusion, or a dream if you must. It is surely a pleasant dream, a happy delusion. But whatever you may see proper to call it, the fact is incontrovertible. Through this faith God becomes the rock and the strength of his children — their shield and their buckler, and the high tower to which they flee, when the ills of life press heavily upon them.

But look again, at the case as it stands in seasons of sorrow and affliction. There are storms, that will rise and beat upon all. Sickness preys upon our bodies; death cuts down the nearest and dearest earthly friends, and at last, he will come and call us hence, to be here no more. But in the midst of these sore and pressing ills, there is a sustaining and comforting power in the religion of God, which arms the soul with fortitude, patience and resignation, and makes us feel, that we are blessed, even in our hours of deepest sorrow. Go to the chamber of sickness, or the bed of death, and there you shall see faith tri-

umphant, even in weakness, and most powerful of all, in the last solemn hour. You may find there, a fellow-creature emaciated, feeble and helpless. The rose of health has faded from the cheek, and the fires of the eye are dim. The cold sweat of death is upon his marble brow, and the monster is near. By his side stands the devoted being, whose fortunes have been linked with his, and who has stood by him, in all his sorrows and joys. And children too, are there to see a father die, and to receive his last blessing. And there they stand, their grief pressing heavily, and their very souls streaming from their eyes; their hearts well-nigh breaking, with anguish. But *he*, the dying man; the lean and wasted skeleton of a human body, weak as an infant, and almost gone; *he alone* is calm, and his peaceful spirit serene as the summer's sky. No cloud of darkness is there; no contending emotions swell that heart, nor cares distress, nor sorrows disturb. God is the rock upon which he immovably stands. God is his strength in this hour of weakness. God is the buckler with which he does battle with death; and God, the Almighty

is the tower to which he flees, and in which, he fears not the arrows of the pale monarch of the tomb. And his feeble voice is heard, in tones of unearthly triumph, saying, "Weep not for me. I go to the bosom of my father and your father, of my God and your God. Already the heavens are opening, and its scenes of glory dawning upon my eyes, and I go in peace to the land of the blessed above." The last struggle comes, and with a song of victory upon his expiring lips, he closes his eyes in death.

And then there is mourning, for the strongest ties of affection are rudely snapped asunder, and hearts must needs bleed, and tears must fall. 'T is nature's holy tribute to the memory of departed joys. But there is comfort even there, for faith lingers, with all its bright and cheering visions. The widow's eye is fixed on heaven, and there remains to her God, who has promised to be the *widow's* God, and the father of the fatherless. And the orphan too, looks upward, and though he weeps, that an earthly father has gone, yet does he rejoice in the blessed assurance, that there is in heaven, a father who never dies.

There the mourners trust, they shall meet the departed, when the conflicts of earth are over, and part no more forever. And the heavens grow bright, and the grave itself, becomes green and beautiful, in the light of a faith so much Divine.

Now, I appeal to the believer, and I ask him to see here, an evidence of the inestimable value of a firm reliance upon God; and I appeal to the infidel, and say to him, "Here are not the theories but the facts," on which I am willing to rest the proof, that God is the strength of man, and the rock upon which he can stand securely, even amid the heaving billows of affliction, and the ruins and desolations of death itself. I tell him, the sun of every day shines upon the reality, of what I have feebly attempted to describe. It shines on it too, not in far distant lands, but in the abodes of your friends and neighbors. The destroyer is abroad — the mourners go about these streets; and this day, and all around you, there are those, who realize in the depths of their souls, the sustaining and comforting power of the religion of Christ, in the hour of sorrow. It is now, in the chamber of sickness, giving to the

faint and dying the only cordial that remains. It lingers to-day, in the house of mourning and death, pouring its heavenly consolations into the hearts of the afflicted; speaking to the lone widow, that her tears may be dry, and to the orphan, that his feeble moan may be hushed; — to the sick, that they may flee to its strong tower for strength; and to the aged and infirm, that they may be buoyant with hope. Call it, if you must, a dream, a fiction, or what you please; but if there is mercy in you, spare to the dying man the cup, which he presses so eagerly to his parched and fevered lips. 'T is the last, that he may drink on earth, and the sweetest, by far, that ever came from the hand of his God. Spare to the aged, the staff upon which he leans so fondly, to support his feeble steps. And for God's sake, hinder not the lone widow, that she may not go to her God. Her idol is shattered, and earth itself has ceased to dazzle her eyes, or captivate her heart. O! let her go to the rock of her strength, the strong tower of her hope. You see the facts, and you know the results. What sub-

stitute can you offer, for the strength and hope thus imparted to the afflicted and sorrowful?

Do you propose a cold and cheerless system, which robs the present of a God, and the future of all hope but the grave? Alas! it were a poor exchange, that could confer no greater boon than this! Or, will you offer a system which makes God a being, whom men dare not trust, and can not love; and which fills the future world with horrors and woes in comparison with which, all the sufferings of earth, are but a drop in the bucket, or as dust in the balance? Must we shut our eyes against the light of heaven, and all its joys, and gaze upon a vast world of torment, unutterable by mortal tongue, and durable as eternity? And shall we then, find God to be our rock and our strength? I pray you what good can we thus obtain? Will it afford a surer refuge from the storm of affliction, when it comes? Will it wipe away the tears from the eyes of the afflicted and sorrowful? Will it pluck one thorn from the pillow of death, or breathe one item of peace, or comfort, to those who mourn? You know the

answer, truth must give to these questions; and I pray you act accordingly.

If the views I have taken of the subject are correct, you will see how important, yea, how unspeakably important are the ministries of a truly Christian faith, in this world; and how necessary it is, to human hopes and human happiness, that it should be cherished, and perpetuated, as the only medium, through which, man can find and realize the benefits of the great truth, that God is his refuge, his strength, and salvation, in whom he may trust. Without it, God appears as an austere and hard Master, or as an inveterate and most implacable enemy, from whom the world has little to hope, and much to fear. Without it, the earth is a land of enemies — a great battle-field, in which, we must make our way through hosts of foes, depending upon the unaided strength of an arm of flesh alone. But with it, God becomes the rock of our strength, the refuge from every storm, the retreat of the unfortunate, the rest of the worn and the weary, the hope of the dying and the resurrection of the dead. Let us then, my brethren, hold fast

the priceless treasures, of faith and hope, that we may realize, in our own hearts, how blessed are they, whose God is the Lord, and who have made him their trust. Then may we be able understandingly, and from the heart, with the prophet of old, to say, "Although the fig-tree should not blossom, and there should be no fruit in the vines, the labor of the olive should fail, and the fields should yield no meat, the flocks should be cut off from the fold, and there should be no herd in the stall, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation." So let us live, and when the final summons comes, to call us from the cares and the conflicts of earth, we will go in peace, and without a sorrow or a tear, to the sanctuary above.

SERMON XVI.

"THE SAVIOUR'S VICTORY."

For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet: The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 1 Cor. 15: 25, 26.

The world has been, from the beginning, a great battle-field, where man has fought for dominion over his fellow-man, or toiled and struggled for the mastery of the evils, with which he is surrounded. In this warfare, of six thousand years, there have been many instances of a good degree of success. Kings have extended their dominion, far and wide, and have ruled long, and swayed the sceptre over large portions of the earth. The throne of the Cæsars was considered stable and enduring; and Alexander is usually said to have conquered the world. Great battles have been fought, and wonderful victories have been achieved, in the fields of war. And in peace too, there have been victories over the obstacles, that impede the progress of our race, towards the development and perfection of

its being. Through physical and moral evils, neither few nor small, and in the midst of enemies within, and foes without, man has battled his way onward, and upward, from savagism to a state of enlightened civilization; and with the aid of Divine truth, from ignorance, and gross idolatry, to the knowledge and worship of the living and true God. And so, the history of the world abounds with the record of heroes and statesmen, of saints and martyrs, of kings and potentates, of victories in war, and victories in peace, and of conquests won by the sword, and by the power of truth and knowledge.

But, the world, in all its history, presents no victory like that of the text, no dominion so wide or enduring, as that, which conquers all enemies, and triumphs over death itself. Such is the reign of the Saviour, and such the victory, which the text calls us to contemplate. Its assertion is, not merely, that he is laboring for the subjugation of his enemies, with a fair prospect of eminent success; but, it is, with an emphasis, indicative of the utmost certainty, he MUST REIGN, until he hath put all enemies under his feet — a

strong mode of expressing his perfect and complete triumph, and their entire subjection to him. It will be proper, in pursuing our subject, and contemplating this victory of Christ, to notice the enemies of the progress of his kingdom, which he must bring into subjection, or destroy, before that kingdom can universally prevail.

I. Ignorance and superstition are formidable enemies of the kingdom of Christ.

Many of the kingdoms, and institutions of the world, depend for their safety, upon the besotted ignorance of the people. Kingcraft and priestcraft may be forced upon an enlightened nation by a strong arm of brute force; and they may be sustained by physical power, for a season. But they originate in the darkness of ignorance, and feel secure, only, when light and knowledge are kept from the masses. Were it not for the ignorance of mankind, there is not on earth, this day, a throne, that could stand for a week, or a head, that could wear a crown, for a day. The Russian Autocrat rules over vast multitudes of men, and a wide territory, and feels that his throne is more stable, than any other, on earth. But who

does not know, that it is so, only because of the dense and dark ignorance of his subjects? Who is not well aware, that were the light of knowledge to be let into the souls of his myriad serfs, the sceptre of power would fall from his hand, and his reign come to a speedy end? If the world does not know this, surely the Czar knows it full well; and hence, the perpetuation of this ignorance, as the safeguard of his throne. Look over all Europe, and behold how the thrones are trembling, and the crowned heads quaking with fear, and feeling, that it is an uncertain tenure by which their dominion is held. The reason is, a few straggling rays of light are gleaming in, upon the thick darkness, which has hitherto enveloped the minds of the people; and they are beginning to understand a little of their dignity, their rights, their power, and their destiny. And all this heaving of the elements, this convulsion among the nations, this struggling for deliverance from the iron bands of oppression, is but the result of a *little* knowledge; and proves, that the dominions of the earth, are, at this day, founded upon the ignorance of man. All of oppression and slavery

are built upon this same foundation. Let the light of knowledge shine upon the human soul, and the oppressed will go free, and the manacles of the slave everywhere, shall be broken. If the masses of Ireland are kept in ignorance, that they may be held in religious and political bondage — if the toiling millions of every part of Europe, are doomed to ignorance, for the same reason, and if knowledge is carefully kept from the slaves of our own country, it is because the rulers and oppressors know, that their dominion is founded upon the ignorance of their subjects, and that light and knowledge are the most dangerous enemies of their sway.

It is not so with the kingdom of Christ. That flourishes best, where light is most abundant. It is not in ages of ignorance, nor among people whose minds are devoid of knowledge, that you are to look for the manifestations of a Saviour's reign. On the contrary, his religion flourishes best among the wisest and most enlightened of our race. Accordingly, its early advocates sought not to establish it, first, among the ignorant barbarians, but went to Rome, and Greece, and

appealed in the Saviour's behalf to the learned Roman, and the wise and polished Greek. They understood full well, that Jesus sought no darkness, or ignorance, as the foundations of his reign; but that, his was emphatically a kingdom of Divine light, which would flourish best, where there was most of knowledge.

Consider the state of the world, as it was when Jesus came, and compare it with what it must be, when his reign is fully established, and you will see, at a glance, that ignorance and superstition are among the most formidable enemies of his kingdom.

In the emphatic language of the prophet, it was truly said, "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Constituted by nature, the child of devotion, and with a spirit yearning for communion with the skies, man stood upon the earth, in the midst of the monuments of eternal skill and wisdom, power and goodness; — he surveyed the handiwork of the Most High, but he knew not its author. The vicissitudes of the world, he could not control, and he saw in the raging storm, and sweeping tempests

the manifestations of a power, stronger than the arm of mortals. He gazed upon the sun, the moon, and the stars, and all the splendid "blazonry of God" on high, and the question came, Whose works are these? By whom, and for what, were they made? But he could not answer. The wisdom of the world tasked her powers; the groves of Baal, and the temples of idolatry were built; and human ignorance invested the wood and the stone, with the powers of the Divinity. Moloch's destroying fires were kindled, and the gloomy valley of the son of Hinnom resounded with the cries of victims, led forth as sheep to the slaughter, and burned to appease the wrath, or secure the favor of an angry and cruel Divinity. India's awful Juggernaut rode over the prostrate bodies of the worshipper at his shrine; and the light of the blessed sun was obscured, by dark clouds of incense, rolling from ten thousand altars, erected to gods, which were no Gods, and whose worship was founded upon ignorance, unrelieved by a ray of light, from the truth Divine.

But when the "world by wisdom knew not

God," Christ came, "a light to them, that sat in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death" to guide their feet in the way of peace. To destroy this ignorance, the prolific mother of this "hellish brood" of superstition, Jesus came; and to pour light upon the darkness of the human soul, and lead a wondering and grateful world, to the knowledge and worship of a God of grace and love, was an important object of his mission.

But this is not all. Man was not only ignorant of God, but also, of himself, his binding duty, and exalted destiny. He saw himself "fearfully and wonderfully made" indeed, but he knew not whence he came, or whither he was going. He knew, for himself, no higher origin, than a child of earth; no purer duty, than the service of self, no higher destiny, than to live and die. He stood, with a soul thirsting for immortality, upon the verge of life, and asked, in vain, Where am I going? He called upon the tombs, and they were silent as the end of all the living. All beyond, was veiled in thick darkness, that his vision could not penetrate; and forth from

this darkness, came the legions of fear and despair, to afflict and torment, and cause him to "go mourning all his days." Elysian fields of sensual delight were, indeed, faintly descried, in the distance; but, Tartarus with its fiends, and its scenes of more than mortal anguish, was a far more prominent object of contemplation; and fears were many, and hopes were faint, and few.

It was the business of Jesus, to proclaim the truth, that man was from above; that he was the child of God, allied to higher natures — that his duty is best performed, by loving his God, supremely, and his neighbor as himself — that his destiny is high, and holy, even a life immortal, and an endless communion with all that is good and pure, where death cannot enter, and where tears never flow. Where these sacred truths are known and appreciated, felt and practised, *there* Jesus reigns; and it is easy to see, that the ignorance of which we have treated, is a formidable enemy of his reign, and that, its dark and gloomy clouds must be rolled away, ere his kingdom shall triumph.

The text gives the assurance, that he shall suc-

ceed in this respect. His throne of light shall be established, and all darkness and ignorance shall be put under his feet. Eternal truth shall illumine the night of this world; and the dawn of an immortal day shall shine upon the ages of eternity; and "there shall be no need of saying, every man to his neighbor, and every man to his brother, know the Lord; for all shall know him, from the least to the greatest."

"He must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet," and the history of the past is the proof, that, this work has been going on, and the pledge of future success. His kingdom appeared, at first, in poverty and weakness, and was opposed by the wealth, the influence, and the power of the world. For eighteen centuries, its course has been onward. It has been working its silent way through the mists of ignorance, the obstinate prejudices, and the inveterate hate of men; and it is, to-day, the religion of the enlightened world. And now, as ever, it flourishes best, where there is most of true light and knowledge. At no period, in all its history, have its

signs of promise been more cheering, or auspicious, than at the present moment.

The sleepless energies of the human mind, everywhere active, and aided by means and agencies of improvement, such as no former age has seen — the rapid changes of thought, and faith, that are constantly at work — the mighty power with which man smites upon the old foundations of the past — the fact, that the cherished opinions of yesterday, are repudiated to-day, and the heresy of to-day, promises to be the orthodoxy of to-morrow; — all these things show, that the days of human ignorance are numbered; and that, the march of the Saviour's kingdom of light and truth is onward, and upward, towards that universal reign, to which the text points the eye of faith and hope.

II. I note sin, as one enemy to the kingdom of Christ, which must be overcome.

He came to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and "his name was called Jesus because he should save his people from their sins." It is by him, that God will "finish sin, make an end of transgression, and bring in everlasting

righteousness." Sin is the great adversary of the Saviour. It scatters blight and mildew, over the fairest fields of his rightful dominion, and changes this beautiful world into a Pandemonium of misery. It blasts and withers the fairest flowers, that bloom in the garden of life, and poisons the deepest and purest fountains of human enjoyment. Look where you please, and sin is there, doing its work of death, and lifting an impious hand, high in rebellion against the authority, the doctrines, the precepts, and the examples of the Saviour. But, this brazen-crested monster must die. The Gospel proposes to conquer this enemy of all felicity. It seeks to purify the heart from evil, and sanctify the affections wholly unto God, so that a willing service shall be rendered unto him. For this purpose, it enlightens the understanding with the knowledge of God and his government, and all truth and duty. It lays down its sacred precepts; breathes its blessed hopes upon the soul; points to the example of the Saviour, as a guide, in the way of life; and brings all the glories of the Divine character, and all the power of faith and love, to

bear upon the heart, to mould it into the image of the Divine Master. It is a work, which begins on earth, and must be consummated in a better world. Is it doubted, that the Gospel will ever accomplish this great end? Behold its power, as manifested, in its early history! See how it laid hold upon the hard heart of persecuting Saul of Tarsus, and brought him, mild as a lamb, to the foot of the cross! Behold its power, on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were smitten at its word, and brought into subjection to the Lord; and they too, of those who had been guilty of his death! Trace its history from that day to this, and see how it has softened the hard heart, and meliorated the asperities of the men of every nation, to whom it has been preached. It has tamed the untutored savage and barbarian, and brought them to the embrace of civilization, and the cultivation of the useful arts and sciences. It has spoken to the ferocious hordes, who knew no law, but the law of might, and whose only appeal was to the sword. It has thrown a sacredness over human life, erected its tribunals of justice among them, and brought

them to the obedience of law and order. And though it has not entirely eradicated the spirit of war, yet, it has visited the tented field with gleanings of mercy, and restrained the war-god from his most atrocious cruelties; so that, the rights of the defenceless are, in some measure respected, and war is no longer a scene of indiscriminate slaughter, rapine and plunder. All this has been accomplished, and though the work is not yet complete, nevertheless, in what has been done, the Gospel has been tested, and proved to be the "power of God unto salvation;" and thus is made manifest the fact, that it is adequate to the performance of all that it promises. Christ must reign until all enemies are put under his feet, and all sin is destroyed.

III. I notice death, as an enemy that Jesus is to destroy.

In the common version of the Scriptures, our text reads as I have quoted it. "The last enemy, that shall be destroyed is death." Leaving out the supplied words, usually printed in *italics*, and rendering it with a more strict fidelity to the original, it will read thus: "The last enemy shall be

destroyed — death." Or in accordance with the usual English order of the sentence — "Death, the last enemy shall be destroyed." The difference between these renderings is obvious. In the common version, death is made to be the last enemy, that shall be destroyed; thus leaving room for the conclusion, that there may be other, and later enemies, that shall not be destroyed. But as it came from the pen of the Apostle, the assertion is, that death is the *last* enemy, and he shall be destroyed.

Death is a familiar subject, and its import is not less mysterious than solemn and momentous. The experience of all ages, from the creation of the world, has proved, that, all that is born on earth must die. We do indeed put far away the evil day; yet, there are seasons of solemn thought, which come upon the most giddy worldling, and cause him to feel, that, however distant the time, the day will surely come, when, he must meet the "pale monarch of the tomb," and be numbered with the dead. But the certainty of death, and the fact, that the generations which have gone before us, have died; and that our fellows

are, even now, dying around us, lifts no cloud from the valley of shadows, nor removes aught of the darkness, that broods over the mystery of the grave. To die, what is it? What is the essence of the thing, we call death? Is it the destruction of all that belongs to our being, and the end of our existence? Is it a fixed and permanent thing, having an existence which never ends? Or, is it, but one of those necessary changes, which the Creator has ordained, for us to pass in our upward course of approximation to himself? These are questions of vast importance, and we may safely say, that, without the Gospel of Christ, they are veiled in impenetrable darkness and mystery.

But in Christ the mystery is revealed. Death is but the negative of life — an evanescent phase in the government of God, and as sure to be swallowed up in the life immortal, as the darkness of night, to flee before the light of the morning sun. And although, to our view, there is a perpetual struggle between life and death, and thus far, the latter seems victorious; yet, we see only the setting sun, and the darkness comes

on, not from its own power, but because, the light is, for a season, withdrawn: we have but to wait in hope, and ere long the sun will come again, and all darkness shall be destroyed. Thus, the glorious sun of righteousness, shall arise upon the night of the tomb; life immortal and unfading shall break forth as the brightness of the morning, and death shall be no more. Hence the Scripture saith, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." This is the last enemy, and he being destroyed, there shall remain none to disturb that calm and eternal peace, which shall remain through all the dominions of our God and his Christ. Upon the risen and exalted head of the Saviour, shall be that crown of life, which is the emblem of the victory he has achieved, and man shall live, and die no more. For this reason, he said, of those who should be raised from the dead, "They are equal unto the angels, neither shall they die any more; but are children of God, being children of the resurrection."

Let the toil-worn and death-smitten children of humanity, look hither, and rejoice in the patience of hope; and let them "wrap the drapery of their couch around them," and lay them down and die in peace, knowing, that their deliverance will come.

And ye, who stand by the bed-side of dying friends, and kindred, and whose tears fall so fast and freely, as ye see the night settling fast and dark, around them; look upward to him, "who was dead and is alive again," and hope joyfully for that morning, which shall dispel the shadows of death, and herald an endless day. Take, ye, the loved, and the lost, and lay them hopefully in the grave. Their last conflict is over. Their last enemy has done his work; and *he* shall be destroyed. Let the green grass grow, and the flowers bloom above them; their life is in God, and he will redeem them from death, and ransom them from the grave. Fear not, neither "mourn as those that have no hope," for thy Saviour is the Lord; and his arm shall deliver. Let this truth be with you, and it shall arm you with fortitude and resignation, under the pressure of the

ills of life, and make you joyous in hope, even in the last conflict with the king of terrors. And when the earth grows dark, and fades upon the sight, and you feel, that death is nigh, then remember, and rejoice in the truth, that, "He must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet, and death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed." Amen, and let all the people say, Amen

SERMON XVII.

THE TRIUMPH OF JOY.

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.
PSALM 30: 5.

THE immense preponderance of good over evil, of happiness over misery, is a sentiment emphatically expressed, and often repeated in the sacred Scriptures. Such are the arrangements of the Divine Providence, and such the will and purposes of God, that perpetual good is the rule; while evil is the exception. The text is one among a multitude of forms, in which, this sentiment is inculcated. There are, doubtless, many causes of suffering, and it is unavoidable, that tears should often flow. But, this is by no means, the permanent and uniform condition of our race. On the contrary, these seasons of weeping and sorrow are comparatively short. They "endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning;" and there are a thousand smiles for every tear. How frequently and emphatically do

the inspired writers bear their testimony to the truth of the principle here indicated! "Sing unto the Lord, O, ye saints; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness; for his anger endureth but a moment." "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger forever." "Go, and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful saith the Lord, and I will not keep mine anger forever."

These are the teachings of God's word, in relation to the anger of the Lord. But when his mercy is the theme, how different the language! "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." "Thy mercy, O, Lord; endureth forever." "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, for his mercy endureth forever." From these quotations it appears most evident, that, whatever may be meant by the anger of the Lord, it is but a mo-

mentary phase, in which his character is presented to human vision. But, his mercy is enduring as himself. It is an eternal attribute of his nature; belonging to his Divinity, and destined to remain the same, while he lives. On the other hand, his anger, instead of being of a substance with himself, is but an evanescent cloud, that passes between man's vision and "the face of the excellent glory;" and that cloud, however dark, and ill boding it may appear, is sure, soon to be dispersed by the sun of his love.

Precisely in accordance with these views of God, as considered in and of himself, are all the arrangements of nature and providence. All the manifestations of the Divine wrath, are graduated by the scale of man's works, and measured, in amount and duration, by this rule, and soon pass away; while the evidences of his love and goodness, extend to heights and depths, that cannot be measured, and are graduated by that eternal fulness, which rises higher, and sinks deeper, than all human guilt and misery; and which is exhaustless as the light of the sun in the firmament, and durable as eternity. If, in all nature

there is one thing calculated to hurt or destroy, it is the exception, rather than the rule; and is passing away, rather than permanent and enduring. Back of it, deeper down, towards the unfailing reality of things, there is an everlasting stream of good, which flows perpetually, and soon overpowers, and obliterates the evils, we so much deplore.

Behold this great truth manifested everywhere, upon the face of the Creator's works! Since the world began, "seed-time and harvest, summer and winter," have succeeded each other, in regular succession. The small herb, the tender blade, and the full ear of corn for the harvest, have been produced in their season; and the exhausted garners have been filled with food for man and beast. The winter winds, and the hoary frosts have visited, and bound the earth in fetters of ice, and scattered the leaves from the trees; causing all nature to put on the appearance of decay and death. But, the recuperative energies of nature have not departed. Winter reigns but for a season, and the joyous spring soon appears, and the time of the singing of birds is at hand

Vegetation starts again to life, and the earth is green and beautiful. The grass grows; the seed yields its fruit, and the store-house is filled.

Occasionally, a famine may occur, in some portion of the world. But, as a general rule, its extent is small, and its duration short. Such a thing as an universal dearth; an entire failure of the laws of nature, to produce all necessary comforts for man, has never been known. There may, also, be slight interruptions of the wonted course of the seasons. Winter may linger in the lap of spring, or, a premature frost may nip the fruit, ere it is fully ripened. But it is only in some small province; and the duration of these apparent irregularities is short. They may "endure for a night," but they vanish before the light of the morning sun. Soon, very soon, nature resumes her wonted course, and the good triumphs over evil. The preponderance of that good, is manifested from the fact, that, these apparent exceptions to the common rule, are noted, and treasured up, as extraordinary events. It sometimes happens, that a tempest, or a tornado sweeps over the land, and produces loss of prop-

erty, or life. But its extent is small. The violent tornado rarely exceeds a few rods in width, or endures more than a few brief moments; and such a thing as an universal tempest, was never known, on earth. However violent the storm, or furious the wind, the laws of harmony and order are at work, and soon, there comes a repose upon the elements — the winds are still — hushed and silent is the voice of the thunder; the sun shines bright, or the stars look serenely down upon a sleeping world; and a blessed calm comes, even as joy succeeds the night of our weeping.

So also, of the life and health of man. It sometimes occurs, that a pestilence prevails. The plague smites a city, and the strong men fall, as grass before the scythe of the mower. But science finds the cause, not in the defective arrangement of God's laws, but in man's ignorance, or disobedience to those laws. And this prevalence of dire disease, is not the permanent state of things. Its fury is soon spent. The blood returns to its wonted channels, and health again visits the habitations of men. And for long years, that period of disease, instead of being

regarded as the fixed and regular order of God's providence, will be remembered, and indicated as one of the remarkable and extraordinary events of time. In the midst of the desolations of the pestilence, we may ever have this blessed hope and comfort; that the overflowing fountain of goodness and mercy, in heaven, is yet full, and unexhausted; and though "weeping may endure, for a night, joy cometh in the morning."

If, from these general views, we come to our own individual experience, we shall find the same principle to be equally true, in its application to the history of our lives. The periods of our sorrow and tears, have been few and far between, as compared with our seasons of smiles and joys. We remember our times of weeping, for the same reason, that we remember a burning fever; because they are uncommon. They are all treasured up, and kept fresh in mind, *because* they are few; but who can number the days in which he has been blessed and happy? Suppose we were to sit down and reckon up the account, for the past year. How think you it would stand? We could, any of us, no doubt, "a tale

unfold," of evils which we have suffered; all duly entered upon the book of remembrance, noted and "conned by heart." It would be a tale of misfortune in business, of losses and disappointment, in the affairs of the world — of sufferings by fire or flood — of false and treacherous friends — of hard struggles and buffetings — of sickness in person or family, and of "all the ills that flesh is heir to." A sad story no doubt. But have we as carefully entered and registered, all that legitimately belongs to the other side of the account? There was a fire at night, and you suffered loss! But how many nights have you laid down under the pavilion of the Almighty, and slept in safety, while the elements were restrained? You was sick, for a day, or a week. But, how many days and weeks, were you kept in health, and saved from the power of disease? And during that year, as it passed, upon whose bounty did you feed every day? Whence came the glorious sunlight, that dawned upon your waking eyes, in the morning; and those breezes, that fanned your brow, in the evening? Whose air was that, which you breathed, every moment? Whose

earth was that, upon which you trod from day to day? And whose waters were they, that gushed from a thousand springs to quench your thirst, when faint with the heat, and warm with the labor of the day? These are the common and abundant blessings of God, and they pass unheeded, and are forgotten, from the very fact of their fulness and constancy. Let one of them be withdrawn, and all that live would die. And yet, so full, and so free, is the supply, that small indeed is the number of those, whose every returning want is not supplied; and short are the periods, that any are left to suffer. The great mass, the vast multitudes are at every, and any possible moment, filled with all necessary good.

In view of the subject, as thus presented, we may see, that there is abundant reason for hopefulness, and reconciliation under the few brief ills, that come upon us. Dark clouds may sometimes gather, and the skies may be overcast, for a season. The winds may blow, and the rain, or the threatening hail may descend. But high above that storm, there reigns eternal sunshine

and all is bright and serene, as though no cloud obscured the skies of earth. That fearful storm, dark and terrible as it may appear, to our limited vision, is confined to a little spot, on this "dim orb." It is but a ripple, upon the placid waters of a vast and boundless ocean. It has not so much as jostled the wheels of nature, or in the least disturbed the harmony of the great system. The sun shines on, and the moon keeps her station in the skies; and the blessed stars sparkle, as ever, in the heavens; nor know they aught of that tempest. Nor are the dwellers upon the other side of the earth, aware of its existence. Furious as it may appear, it can shake no pillar of the universe; nor can it endure, but for a moment. Soon, the elements will seek their accustomed repose; and though the night may weep, the morning will smile, and the green earth will teem again with the tokens of the Divine benignity. And so, of other things of this sort. Back of them all, there is a great conservative law, which comes in to save; and ultimately, the good preponderates over all the evils, we see in the universe around us. Amid them all, there is

good reason for a calm and trustful hope, that, God will bring order out of apparent confusion; and move on his own undisturbed affairs, towards the great and benevolent end, for which all things were made, and to which, they are all tending.

I would not be dogmatical, upon a subject of this sort; but I must think, the same principles may, with the utmost propriety, be carried over to the moral world, and that, they lose none of their force by such an application.

Nature, though not the most full, and definite, is nevertheless, a true interpreter of God; because his works are but an expression of himself. The great worlds, are but the thoughts of God, made tangible to human souls; and I hold, that, the principles there unfolded, are indeed *principles* of his government, true now and ever, and in all departments of his dominion. If, as we have attempted to show, the good preponderates over the evil, in the material universe, the presumption is fair, that it is so, in the moral and the spiritual. And if so, then everywhere, it is true, that, though "weeping may endure for

a night, joy cometh in the morning." We may thus survey the whole vast domain of God, and say, of all the evil, that meets our view; it is but an evanescent phase in the movement of the stupendous creations of God, designed to endure only for a season; and at last, to be overshadowed and lost, in that overflowing fulness of Divine goodness, which constitutes the essence of the Divinity himself.

Surely, a view so hopeful and cheerful, so honorable to God, and consolatory to man, ought to be cherished among the dearest treasures of the human soul; for, it alone, can comfort us in affliction, and enable us to run with patience, the race set before us. To the faint and the sick, the worn and the weary of earth, there is comfort in the thought, that these afflictions endure but a moment; and though the night of their sorrows may be dark and dreary, and their pillows must be wet with many tears, yet the morning cometh; and then, shall the light of a pure and blessed joy chase all gloom and darkness away. To each individual soul, God has allotted his portion of weeping and woe; not as an end, but as a

means of promoting a higher and holier end. And his wisdom has ordained, that this period of suffering shall terminate. "Joy cometh in the morning."

We may apply the principle, in hand, in its widest possible extent, and yet, hope for its perfect truth. God acts not by partial, but by general laws. No individual, or set of individuals, has a right to claim a monopoly of the blessings of this sacred truth; nor has any man a shadow of justification for hoping, that, in his case, tears shall be wiped away, and *his* sorrows be succeeded by a cloudless morning of joy; while he denies, that the blessings of this principle, will extend to his weeping brethren. The same reason, any individual has for trusting, that his sorrows will soon end, must apply to his fellowmen, and the principle is no more true in one case than another.

We may then, for a moment contemplate the subject in its broadest aspect, for the whole race is interested; and it may be applied to the great body of humanity, as truthfully, as to any individual, belonging to that body. This world is

often called "a vale of tears," and though I am not prepared to admit the propriety of such an appellation, in its strictest sense; yet, it must be confessed, that, there are many sorrows and tears on earth. Uninterrupted sunshine we may not hope to enjoy. Afflictions will come, and sorrows will assail us. Here, the heart must bleed, and our experience must be often in weeping and tears. This we know full well; and we may also know, that, none are exempt from these evils. The question of their *duration*, is one of deep and absorbing interest. Is this the fixed and permanent state of man? Must his lot be ever one of sorrow, and will his tears never cease to flow? This world is not our home, for here we have no continually abiding city. It is, as it were, but the night of our existence; when we see through a glass darkly, and are surrounded with shadows, dark and dreary. Stars of hope there are, indeed, which shine upon this darkness, and cheer the lonely hours, with rays from the eternal source of day. But still, we travail in pain, and frequently weep, in the bitterness of our spirits. Is there no morning to rise, and chase

this darkness away? Must we ever dwell in this land of tears, and our eyes always be wet with weeping? Nay, thanks be to God! "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

These transient scenes of sorrow are passing away. The creation, which now groaneth in pain shall be delivered from this bondage, and translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God; "And there shall be no more sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things shall have passed away."

True, to human vision there is a deeper, and a darker night approaching. It is the night of the grave. Death is abroad, and he cuts down all that live, and consigns them to the silent tomb; and thither have gone the generations which have preceded us, on this fleeting, shifting stage. Yet, even death is not a fixed and permanent reality in this universe. It is but the negation of life; not even an entity; but a deprivation; and it is, in the end, to be swallowed up of life. Nowhere in the universe, does death perpetually reign, as a fixed, permanent and immutable fact;

but everywhere, life rises from its ruins. The night fades before the morning light; the death of the seed is followed by a new creation, and the decay of the old, ministers to the life of the new. The winter kills, but the spring makes alive, and countless forms of life rise up from the ashes of the dead, in every revolving year. Dark may that night seem, which comes upon man, when he is called to die. Gloomy, indeed, may the vault of the grave appear; but its dominion is short. There is a blessed time coming, when the dead shall live. All bright and glorious is that era, to which the faith of the Gospel looks, as a morning of joy, when the tears of humanity shall have ceased to flow; and the permanent and eternal life of the soul shall be revealed in full perfection and beauty. "And there shall be no night there;" for God, himself, shall be the light and the glory of that better land. So, when earth sorrows shall be ended, and the light of an eternal day shall have dawned upon the night of death, "then shall come the time of the Restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began,"

when tears shall be wiped from all faces, and God shall be all in all.

Let the mourners be comforted. The loved one has departed. Low, lies his head in the grave; and dark is the curtain, that hides him from your sight. For him, however, there is life in God; and that life shall be revealed. Death cannot always bind him; for there is one stronger than the strong man armed, and he shall deliver. And for you, who mourn and weep for the dead, there is comfort provided. To-day, the tears may fall fast and freely, from your eyes, and your hearts may be heavy ladened with sorrow. But it shall not be so always. To you, and to the world, the word has gone forth, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Hear it, ye tossed, and ye tempted; ye weeping and sorrowful sons of humanity; hear it, and rejoice, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh.

SERMON XVIII.

THE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are ye? Acts 19: 15.

The historical circumstances connected with this passage are, briefly as follows. Paul was residing at Ephesus, preaching the Gospel, and disputing daily, in the school of one Tyrannus. It pleased God to confirm his teachings by certain miracles, so that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits went out of them. Then certain vagabond Jews, exorcists, seeing the success of the Apostle, and thinking, perhaps, there was some magic charm in the name of Jesus, took it upon themselves to attempt similar works. They called, therefore, over those that had evil spirits, saying, "We adjure thee, by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth; and there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, that did so." "But the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I

know and Paul I know, but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that, they fled out of the house, naked and wounded."

A few words of explanation, are necessary to a clear understanding of this portion of the sacred history. There were, in that day, some peculiar notions of spirits, both good and bad. It was believed, that the souls of men survived the body, and at death, went into the world of spirits; the good to Paradise; and the bad to "*hades;*" and that, they were sometimes permitted to return to the earth, for various purposes: among others, to afflict with diseases. These were called demons, and most persons, afflicted with malignant diseases, were supposed to possess a demon. To this cause the various kinds of insanity, and madness, were referred, in an especial manner; and the insane were called *demoniacs*, because, they were supposed to be possessed of a demon, or evil spirit. In such cases, whatever the patient said, was attributed to the evil spirit, which was thought to possess, and control his

body. The historian has here employed the mode of expression usual, in his day; and recorded the facts, in the case, in the light in which they were looked upon, by common consent; deeming, no doubt, the facts themselves, far more important than any explanation that might be given.

Relative to the persons, who made the attempt to heal the insane by the name of Jesus, a few particulars may be noted. They are called "vagabonds," that is, wanderers; men who had no fixed or permanent dwelling-place. They were "exorcists;" that is, persons who pretended to heal the sick, by casting out the evil spirits which caused the disease. Moreover, the opinion of the age was, that there were certain names, of which demons had great dread; and that, when these names were pronounced in the hearing of persons, who were possessed of demons, the evil spirits would come out of them, and they would recover. Hence, we find the inquiry often made, of those who wrought miracles; by what name they performed these wonderful works?

In regard to these exorcists, history informs us,

that they had a certain mystical pronunciation of the name Jehovah; a name that no Jew would pronounce. With this, they wandered from place to place, pretending to cast out evil spirits, and thus, to heal the sick. When they saw the miracles wrought by Paul, they probably thought him a more successful practitioner of the same art as themselves; and hearing him use the name of Jesus, supposed they had discovered the secret of his success; and without the magnanimity of Simon Magus, who offered money for this gift, they went immediately to work on their own account. They called over the demoniac saying, "We adjure thee by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." But he had heard of Jesus, and of Paul, and answered in the language of our text, "Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are ye? And he leaped upon them and drove them out of the house." Thus ended this attempt to inspire human folly with a Divine power, by baptizing it in the name of Christ.

The use I propose to make of the text, is simple, and easy to be understood. The spirit of evil is abroad in the world. In all painted masks

and various robes, it lurks, sly as the serpent in Eden, in the world, and afflicts the human soul with the loathsome leprosy of sin. To check the manifestations of this spirit — to overcome it, and cast it out of the children of men, has ever been the object of the wise and the good; and it cannot be denied, that there have been many, in every age, who have made gain; with pretensions of ability to heal the moral and spiritual maladies of the world. And now, the great truth I would wish to illustrate is simply this. The name of Jesus is alone powerful to perform this work. I use the name of Jesus here, of course, as a symbol of his religion; and in that sense, I say, "There is no other name given under heaven, among men whereby we must be saved." It, only, can reach the human heart, with a healing and regenerating influence; and the most obstinate spirits of evil, know THAT NAME, and bow down afraid before it, confessing its power, and fleeing from its sound; while they will not down, at the bidding of any other; nor even at that, when it comes not with its own Divine authority.

In illustration of this idea, let it be observed,

I. There is one, and but one principle, on which, the gospel of Jesus relies for overcoming the evil of men's hearts and lives; and that is, the principle of overcoming evil with good.

This, stands out most clearly, and prominently, in the teachings and examples of the Saviour. Look at his teachings; and you shall find down deep, at the foundation, underlaying and terminating all, this sacred truth, that evil can be overcome only, by the power of goodness. Before his day, the doctrine had been, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," and the world had been engaged in a long and arduous, as well as desperate, and fruitless attempt, to overcome evil with the power of evil. The teachings of the philosophers, and the systems of ethics and religion, and all the practices and theories of men and nations, were but a contest of antagonist evils; an attempt to offset and overbalance, one evil with another. And the result was, as might have been anticipated. Possibly, there might have been instances, where the maniac had been chained, and thus restrained from committing the full amount

of evil, that he might otherwise have done. But to cast out the evil spirit, and restore the man to his right mind; and thus, render him harmless as a child; this was a work which was never yet accomplished, by such means. But Jesus founded his doctrines and precepts upon a different basis. "I say unto you, Resist not evil. If a man smite thee on the one cheek, turn the other also. And if a man sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them, that despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your father, who maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain upon the just and the unjust." Thus he taught men to seek to overcome evil; and represented God, as always practising upon the same principle. Though men were wicked, yet the sun, and the rain came upon the evil and unthankful; and upon the vilest of the vile, his blessings were poured out, in rich abundance.

These were the teachings of Jesus, whom Paul

taught, and herein resides their mighty power to cure the moral maladies of the world.

Look at his *example;* and you shall find a practical illustration of this same truth. He was at all times surrounded with enemies, who watched every opportunity to do him evil, and even sought his life, with all eagerness. But he never opposed to them, anything but the spirit of kindness. Obedient to his own precept and doctrine, he loved those that hated him, and prayed for those that persecuted him. When he spoke, he opened his mouth with blessings, and the people "wondered at the gracious words that proceeded from him." When the woman caught in sin was brought to him, that he might decide whether she should be stoned to death according to the custom, he said, "Which of you is without sin, let him cast the first stone." "And being convicted by their own consciences, they went out, one after another, until all were gone." And when he saw, that none remained to condemn, he said, "Neither do I condemn thee, Go, and sin no more." In the like spirit, he met the contumely and abuse, the buffetings and scourgings of his

enemies. When they smote him, and spat upon him, he uttered not a word; and when they had brought him to the cross, he died with a prayer for his murderers upon his lips. This was Jesus, whom Paul preached, as enduring contradiction of sinners, and commanding at all times, "If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst, give him drink;" and in this feature of his character you may see the secret of that mighty power, which he had, over the human heart and conscience. The publicans and sinners drew near to hear him, and were attentive to his words. It is remarkable, that those who were considered the wicked of the world, were not the enemies of Christ. The "common people heard him gladly," and it was left for religious bigotry to do, what brazen-faced iniquity dare not attempt. The publicans and sinners, unused to aught but curses and denunciations, had never heard the like before; and they gathered around him, and hung with rapture upon his words; and the hardened criminal felt his heart relent, and was melted, into contrition, in the presence of that strange being, whose words came from the deep fountains

of Heaven's love, and whose presence was surrounded, with the breathings of Divine truth and mercy. Before him the maniacs were silent and calm; and even, that raving madman, whose wild, shriek rang, day and night, among the tombs, "whom no man could bind, for he brake the bands asunder," and who "cut himself with stones;" HE was hushed, and still, in the presence of the Son of God, and became harmless as a lamb, before the power of the Lord divine. And all this, is the result of the fact, that he "spake as never man spake," and the secret of it is; he overcame evil with good. And so, when the disciples were sent out, and endued with power from on high; they returned again with joy, wondering at the new discoveries they had made; saying, "Lord, even the devils, are subject unto us, through thy name."

And again, after the departure of Christ, signs and wonders followed those, who went forth in his name. There were gathered together, on the day of Pentecost, a great multitude, of various tongues and nations; among them, the Jews who had killed the Lord of life and glory. Peter

stood up and addressed them in the name of Christ, and informed them, that, by his name the wonders they had witnessed had been wrought. He charged them with having killed the Messiah, and assured them, that, the blood of the innocent was unwashed upon their hands. But he uttered no curses; he indulged no spirit of wrath or cursing. Had he done so, they would have braced their nerves and said, "Who are ye?" But Peter said unto them "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye persecuted, both Lord and Christ." And when they heard *that*, they were pricked in the heart, and said unto Peter, and the rest of the disciples, Men and brethren what shall we do?" They could have been told well enough, that Jesus had been raised up as an avenger, and would come out against them, with all wrath and vengeance; for, this would have been in accordance with the principle of overcoming evil with evil, to which they were well accustomed. But when they learned, that God's goodness was high, above all their sins, and that, he had made that Jesus, whom

they had slain, Lord and Saviour their hearts were touched and subdued; and the result was, three thousand were converted in one day. It was the revelation of the power of that principle, which meets evil with good, and in Christ's name and spirit, casts out devils, and purifies men's souls of the most obstinate spirits of evil.

And so, this is the great principle, which, in every age, and every conflict, has come off more than conqueror; distinguishing the true Gospel of Christ, and giving it the victory; and preserving its steady and uniform march, onward towards an universal empire. He who comes with doctrines deeply imbued in this spirit, and a practice conforming thereunto; comes in the name, and the power of Christ, and before him the spirits of evil will flee away.

Take an instance or two, in later times; illustrative of the fact, that this spirit has lost none of its power; but that, the most obstinate spirits of evil, still know, and are submissive to the voice of Jesus, while they will tear and rend those who call in an unknown voice.

I select as peculiarly appropriate, the same

class of persons to whom the text, doubtless refers, the insane. What a melancholy spectacle does the treatment of the insane present for many ages past! Unfortunately bereft of reason, men have ceased to treat them as human beings. They have been shunned, as very devils incarnate, and the strong arm of brute force has been laid heavily upon them. Ponderous chains have clanked upon their limbs; and bolts, and bars, have reared barriers, full and impassable. between them and their fellow-creatures. Whips and thongs have been plied, to free them from their evil spirits; and it has been thought, that an iron arm of power could alone control them. And what has been the result? They have raved and muttered their curses. Their spirits have been goaded to a most desperate madness; and as those who have persecuted them, have talked of religion, they have peered from their dungeons, and with glaring eyes and maniac laugh, have said, in the spirit, if not in the language of the text; "Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who are ye?" The exorcists came not, in the spirit of the Master; and the evil spirits would not "down at their bid-

ding." With the example of Jesus before us, who always treated the insane with all consideration and kindness; it took the enlightened world more than eighteen hundred years to learn, that goodness is an overmatch for insanity itself. It is the spirit of Jesus; and the raving maniac, hears his voice, and knows it, and becomes calm and tranquil before him. In this spirit, the devils are cast out, and the maniac is restored to his right mind. Thank God, the lesson has been learned at last; and now, you may go to our lunatic asylums, where hundreds of the insane are congregated; and clad in the panoply of Jesus; the spirit of love and kindness, those who attend them, walk in safety among the furious madmen, and no hair of their heads is injured. And as for the insane themselves; subdued by this spirit, they come to themselves, and are restored to their friends, as they were before; and remain standing monuments of the power of the name of Jesus to cast out devils, as in the days of old.

A striking illustration of this fact may be found in the labors of Miss Dix, who has, not inappropriately, been called the "God-appointed mission-

ary to prisons and alms-houses." Mrs. Child says of her, that "among the hundreds of crazy people, with whom her sacred mission has brought her into companionship, she has not found *one* individual, however fierce and turbulent, that could not be calmed by Scripture and prayer, uttered in low and gentle tones. On one occasion she was cautioned, not to approach a raving maniac. He yelled frightfully, day and night; rent his clothes; plucked out his hair; and was so violent, that it was supposed he would murder any one who ventured within his reach. Miss Dix began to read, with serene countenance and gentle voice, certain passages of Scripture, filled with the spirit of tenderness. His shouts gradually subsided, and at last he became perfectly still." When she paused, he said meekly, "Read me some more, it does me good." And when she said, "I must go away now." "No," said he, "you cannot go. God sent you to me, and you must not go." "Give me your hand," said he. She gave it, and smiled upon him. The wild expression of his haggard countenance, softened into tearfulness as he said, "You treat

me right. God sent you." With a smile she said to another maniac, "Henry, are you well to-day?" "Hush! hush!" said he. "There are angels with you! They have given you their voice."

Truly, there are angels with those, who go in the name and the spirit of Jesus; and their voices are heard, in the language, that comes rich with the spirit of love. The maniac hears, and knows that voice, and becomes calm as the summer's morning.

Take another illustration of the truth I am endeavoring to unfold; furnished in the temperance movements of the day.

The spirit of intemperance walked abroad unchained in our land, and entered into many. The unskilful exorcists tried, in vain, to cast him out. They looked upon the poor inebriate as a lost man, and treated him with cold contempt. They cursed him, and in all bitterness, cast him out of the society of the virtuous, in this world; and sentenced him to the lowest, and hottest hell, in the next; and talked to him of Jesus whom Paul preached. The result was, he waxed worse

and worse; saying practically, "Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are ye?" Finally, it was given up, and put down as a fixed fact, that when once the spirit of intemperance had fairly entered a man, it could not be cast out. But, in due time there came those, who spake in different tones. They went forth in the spirit of Jesus; they called in his name, and the poor drunkard in his cups, knew that calm, clear voice. They breathed his spirit, and it found an answering chord in his soul, and the abandoned were saved. The lost man was himself again; and he stood up redeemed and regenerated; and there was joy in many a desolate abode, as the prodigals came flocking to their homes. The vast success, which has attended the movements in that cause, is all to be attributed to the fact, that, a kindlier spirit has been breathed into the labors in its behalf; and men have gone into it more in the spirit of the Master. The most abandoned know its power, and will obey; but they will not heed the words of one who comes in the name of Jesus, but in the practice of wrath. That was a dark day in the history of this cause, when its advo-

cates staggered, and faltered, in their firm reliance upon the power of good to overcome evil; and called upon the arm of the law, strengthened by constables, sheriffs, fines and imprisonments, to help on the work of the Lord. Possibly, the maniac may be chained thus, but that he should ever be restored to his right mind, is impossible. While ye stood upon the immortal rock, and wielded the weapons of Jesus, ye stood firmly; and did battle with a mighty hand; but, departing from that, or faltering in it, ye lost the right arm of your power. One single man; pleading in the name of Jesus, and going forth in his spirit, is mightier far, than the arm of a commonwealth, and he shall cast out devils, that will mock and deride, all your "Laws of Assembly," and your "Acts to amend an act."

The spirit of intemperance, with red eye and bloated brow, wanders among the tombs, and unfrequented places of the earth — he lurks in every corner, and hides in every den, and peering out from his hiding-places, and beholding your officers and laws, engaged in a warfare against him, he laughs them to scorn, and defies

them to their face; saying, "Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are ye, that I should obey you?" One voice, and one only, does he fear, or will he heed; and that, is, the voice of Christ, which breathes Heaven's own love upon the soul. Let that voice be heard alone, and the victory is sure. It never failed, and though there are evil spirits, that come not out, "except by much prayer and fasting," yet come they must, when the Master's voice is heard.

Let these remarks suffice in illustration of the position with which I started, that there is a power in the religion of Christ, to overcome evil and heal the moral maladies of the world, which exists in no other thing, beneath the sun. No system of men; though it comes to us armed with the thunders of Sinai, and accompanied with the terrors of a hell, dark as Erebus, and hot as the furnace of perdition; can so move, and mould, and melt the human soul, as it is moved and melted by the voice of Jesus, which speaks of Heaven's love; nor can any accumulation or multiplication of evils threatened, cast out the evil

spirits from men, or restore the insane to his right mind.

Human philosophy, and learning, and wisdom too, are powerless, unless they are baptized in the name, and the spirit of Jesus. Learned a man may be, and wise as Socrates. Eloquent he may be, as Demosthenes, or Cicero; and he may come to the people with words of beauty, and thoughts from the most profound oracles of human wisdom; but if he leave out Jesus, and his Divine spirit and authority, there is a fatal defect, that will render his efforts powerless; and his words though beautiful and sublime, shall fall upon his hearers like moonbeams upon the iceberg; which they cannot warm, or melt, however they may enlighten. Sad, will that day be, for the cause of virtue on earth, when the ministers of religion shall seek to bind the evil spirits, rather than to cast them out; and to do this, shall depend upon their own wisdom, rather than the power of Jesus, and his holy love. Then will the glory of the Church depart, and, as her watchmen adjure the evil spirits to come out of men, the answer shall be, "Jesus I know and

Paul I know, but who are ye ?" But remaining faithful, and cleaving, yet more closely, to the Divine Master, Zion shall arise and put on her beautiful garments.

"Jesus, that name shall calm their fears,
Dispel their doubts and dry their tears,
Shall ease the anxious, throbbing breast
And give the weary mourner, rest."

SERMON XIX.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. PSALM 84: 10.

THE bard Milton puts into the mouth of one of his rebellious angels, the sentiment, that it is better "to rule in hell, than serve in heaven." The idea is, doubtless, quite congenial with that love of power, which marks the human character; but it stands diametrically opposed to the lessons of experience, and the teachings of the Divine word. *These* would, rather, reverse the proposition, and teach us that it is better to be a servant in the temple of God, than a ruler in the habitations of wickedness. Those who are acquainted with the history of the author of our text, are aware that, he was peculiarly well qualified to judge, in the premises. Leaving the idea of inspiration out of the question, and viewing the text simply as a conclusion, drawn from the experience of the writer, it is worthy of much,

and serious consideration. It was not an ardent youth, fired with new-born zeal, or enthusiasm, caught in the fever of momentary and deep excitement, who uttered this language. Nor was it a man borne down with adversity, and made sick of the world, by the harassing evils with which he was surrounded. But it was a man, who had long been King of Israel, and enjoyed a full share of the riches and honors of the world — an old man, leaning upon his staff — a man who had, in his day served, at times, both God and Mammon; and who was rich in the lessons of wisdom, gathered from the experience of a long and eventful life. Such was the man, who gave his judgment, that it was better to be a door-keeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. He had fully learned the salutary lesson, which he elsewhere expresses, that there is "no peace to the wicked," while, that man is blessed, above the ordinary lot of mortals, who dwells in the sanctuary of his God.

It is true, God may be worshipped everywhere, and it is of little consequence where human devotions are offered. The man, who feels, that

God is with him, and upon whose heart the incense of prayer and praise is laid, is a true worshipper, though he dwell in the wilderness, or upon a solitary island of the sea; for, God is not alone worshipped in "temples made with hands." I presume, however, the Psalmist had particular reference to the *public* worship of God, as performed by his people, when he spoke of being a door-keeper in the house of his God. Without pausing for anything like a critical examination of the peculiar phraseology of the text, I shall take it as an indication of the high estimate, which the author placed upon the privilege of worshipping God, "in the congregation of the people." He was rich and honorable. He sat upon a throne, and was clothed in purple and fine linen — the luxuries of earth were around him, and a crown of honor was upon his head. But all these were dust and vanity, when compared with the blessedness, that came down upon his soul in the house of devotion. He would exchange his sceptre for the shepherd's crook — he would give his sumptuous fare for the board of the humble poor — he would lay aside his diadem

and his crown, and come down from his throne of power, to stand as an humble door-keeper in the house of God, and count it a bargain, which had made him rich, in comparison with the poverty of soul, that would come upon him, if debarred from the worship of his God. Such is the inestimable value, that David attached to the house of devotion; and to us it should be a matter of serious inquiry, whether it is less valuable now, than in the days of the text. It is upon the subject thus presented, that I intend this discourse to bear.

I desire to call your attention to the important ministries, which are performed by the institution of public worship, and to the consequent privilege and duty of cherishing it, as one of the most valuable blessings, with which we are favored. I remark then, that, the worship of God, as conducted in our Christian churches is valuable,

I. On account of its salutary influence upon individual character and happiness.

It is in reality far more desirable for a man to *be* something worth, in and of himself, than to possess a world; because our happiness flows from

what we *are*, rather than from what we *have;* and also, because the latter, we are liable to lose, while the former cannot be wrested from us. Now, let any man of ordinary candor and intelligence, go about the work of forming an estimate of the amount of influence, which has been exerted by the institution of public worship, in making him what he is, in feeling, in habits of thought, and character; and he will find, that he is more deeply indebted, in this matter, than he, at first imagines. Our parents, before us, were trained in a land of churches, and constantly under their influence; and whatever of disposition they had to bring us up, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" whatever of power they had to inspire our tender minds with a feeling of reverence for God and his laws, or a love of truth and duty, was nurtured and kept alive and active, by the influence of the institution of public worship. The schools in which we were educated; the companions with whom we associated; the society in which we have moved, all received their tone and bias, from that same influence; — were pervaded with it, and

owe to it, all of power, for good, they possessed. There is not, to-day, a feeling of our hearts, a sentiment of our souls, a principle of truth, or virtue, of love to God, or good-will to man; a shield from temptation; a thought of confidence in God, or a hope in his goodness, for time or eternity, which has not been born in the house of worship, or nurtured and strengthened by the influence, there brought to bear upon us. It has been the foster-parent, at least, of all that is solid and thoughtful, about us, and of all of virtue, love, and hope, we possess. Its holy breathings swept over our infant thoughts, and tuned them to virtue, and to God. It was felt in the prayer, taught us by a mother's voice, in life's early dawn. It was manifested in every virtuous principle and good resolve, which came from that mother's love. It whispered to us, in the sweet and glad voices of our youthful companions; and in every period of our lives, it has pervaded and sanctified the circles in which we have moved; filled the very air that we breathe, and made us morally, and spiritually, what we are.

And then, again, what visions of glory and

bliss has it not opened before us! What fountains of misery have been dried up, and what new sources of happiness has it given us! Where learned we, and what is it, that has kept alive in our minds, the great truth that there is a God, all good and wise, to whom we may look as our father, and friend, under all the circumstances of human life? What is it, that has stamped the impress of a Saviour's love, of Calvary and its cross, upon our souls? What is it, that has brought another world to view, and kept fresh and green in our hearts, the blessed hope of life and immortality? Nay, what is it, that has raised us above the benighted idolater, who worships the wood, or the stone, and submits to cruel tortures in the service of his gods? I point you to the temple of Christian devotion, and I bid you there, behold the secret of the matter. But for that temple, you and I, had been to-day, in the darkness of heathen ignorance, and not a whit better than the veriest idolater that lives. From no other source, on earth, has there been exerted upon us, an influence so salutary, or so all-pervading, as this; and it is not too much to ask,

that men should remember and cherish deeply in their hearts, that, by which they have been so abundantly blessed.

Not only this; but, I would persuade you, to compare, the real enjoyment, of the house of worship, with that, which flows from the amusements, which men follow in such eager haste. To which portion of time, does memory recur with most pleasure? To that, spent in the house of worship? Or to that, which has been devoted to the pursuit of pleasure? I have no word to utter against innocent, and rational amusements. To the buoyant spirits of youth they are proper, and may be made useful; and I would be the last to write the wrinkles, or the gravity of age, upon the blooming face of youth. Nay, let it be wreathed in smiles, and let its gladsome heart speak out its joy. Let it seek amusement and recreation; not as the business, but, as the relaxation of life. So God has ordained, and he that wars against it, wars with nature, and will surely be worsted in the battle. But, what I wish to say, is merely this. Pleasures soon pall upon the senses, and leave the soul unsatisfied, as it

was before. They afford little satisfaction, in the retrospect; and in themselves, give no calm and solid happiness, which can be compared to that, which comes upon the devout soul, in the hour of communion with God. The social party, the cheering song, the enlivening dance, are all well enough in their sphere, and except in their excess, are liable to no objection. But, their impressions are momentary, and their pleasures fleeting and transitory. Highly as they may be prized, and much as they may be doated upon, by the young, there is not before me, a youth, in life's gayest morning, who will not remember this house, with calm and heartfelt joy, when that social party, and pleasant dance, shall be forgotten, or remembered only, as a fragile flower that bloomed and withered, in a day. When age comes, or sickness, or misfortune shall befall you; when disappointed hope turns away from the gilded bauble, to which it has been aspiring, and the soul, thrown back upon itself, feels how fleeting and unsatisfactory are all earthly things, *then* will the memory of this sanctuary of God, and the principles here imbibed come, with a blessed influence, upon your

fainting spirits, and cause you to confess the wisdom of David's choice, when he said, "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

II. I note the influence of public worship upon the community at large.

Society is made up of individuals, and it needs no argument to show, that anything which benefits the individual man, is a blessing to the body of society. But *how much* we, as a people, owe to the influence of public worship, as a prominent institution of our country, does not so readily appear to the superficial observer. If you compare the state of society, in this country, with that, of those lands where Christian worship is unknown, you will see, in the good order and peace, that prevail — in the laws for the protection of the weak against the strong — in our asylums for the orphan — our hospitals for the sick — our refuges for the poor — and our agencies for the relief of all kinds of human suffering, some of the prominent fruits of the wide influence of our temples of public worship. In

no nation, where God is not worshipped, can such things be found.

When our forefathers landed upon the shores of New England, among their first doings was the erection of a house of worship; and the spirit therein cultivated was diffused through all their laws and institutions. They were a people who worshipped God, and that worship served to hallow and sanctify the blessed institutions, they planted. If New England, this day, stands pre-eminent in the world, for its love of law and order, and for all those advantages, that exalt and ennoble any people; it is because the foundations of its prosperity were laid, upon the acknowledgment of God, and its people have, from its infancy, worshipped in his temple. It is true, that, schools were established, and it is customary for men to boast of these; as the cause of this unwonted prosperity. They are indeed, sources of a just pride, and of incalculable good; but, had not they, too, been pervaded with the leaven of Divine truth, and sanctified by the influence, that has so constantly gone forth from our houses of worship, they would have become schools of

vice ; training the intellect, merely, and preparing each rising generation, to become still greater adepts in iniquity. Let them cease to educate the heart, as well as the head, and they will become curses rather than blessings. The true glory of New England ; the prime cause of its success ; the cause which lies back of all others — the safeguard of its morals — the preserver of that righteousness, which is the safety of a nation, is in those temples of worship, which point their spires towards heaven, in every city, village and hamlet, through all its length and breadth. I would not claim for them, more than strict justice will allow. But, if they were no more than mere halls, convenient for public lectures, on subjects of importance, — if there, the people assembled, from week to week, and were expected to preserve a serious and orderly demeanor, and listen with attention, to what might be offered, their influence could not be otherwise than salutary, upon the public weal.

But they are more than this. They are places for the cultivation of the moral and religious nature ; the highest faculties with which man is

endued. And these faculties, can no more be properly developed, and trained, without the aid of public worship, than the intellect can be properly cultivated, without schools. But these temples are the altars, where men pay their devotions to God; where a sense of man's responsibility to his Creator is kept alive; where the standard of public morals is erected, and kept elevated; where bright hopes are cherished, and man is reminded of his dignity, his duty, and his destiny. And from them, there goes out a perpetual, and healthful influence, keeping up the love of law, order, and decorum; restraining the boisterous passions; and aiding in all, that can beautify and adorn human society. In them, the public sentiment, upon all questions of morals, and religion, is formed; and the pressure of this sentiment is brought to bear, with mighty power, against vice, in all its forms. All the statutes of the state, and the ordinances of your city, and the officers of the law, would be powerless were they not upheld by the moral sense of the people, which is formed, and regulated, by the institution of public worship. Without it, your

police of cities, and your attempts to govern town, or country, would be a nullity. That sentiment is stronger than the sword; and here, it peacefully maintains law and order, and morality, in a degree, that myriad armies, in other lands, strive in vain to enforce.

Say what you will, about Priestcraft, and the iniquities, that are practised under the garb of religion; I deny not, there is something of truth in what you say; but, if to remove the evil, you would desert, or break down, the altars of religion, you would find to your cost, that the remedy is worse than the disease. Destroy your churches; dissolve your worshipping assemblies, and soon, very soon, the standard of public morals will fall low — public opinion will cease to act upon vice, and the inevitable result will be, that an overwhelming flood of sin will deluge the land. It gives me no feeling of envy, or jealousy, to see churches going up, and thronged, with those who are called by another name; and worship by a creed, that differs from mine. Rather I rejoice, that there are places where all can worship, in the manner most consonant with

their views of duty; and I know, that good is the result; for, thus, the tone of public morals is elevated, and the foundations of our national safety are cemented and strengthened. Destroy the worship of God in these United States, and our boasted liberty would be a curse. One quarter century would not pass, ere the hand of violence, would lay hold upon the pillars of the temple of our liberty, and pull it down about the ears of the people; for the simple reason, that, our government is of all others, most dependent upon the moral sense, and the virtue of the people. I cannot therefore, regard that man, as a well-instructed, and faithful lover of his country, who encourages, by precept or example, a neglect of public worship, and thus undermines the foundations of our national safety, and political prosperity.

Attend now to some conclusions, that seem to flow from our subject, as thus presented.

I. The support of public worship is a duty, that every man owes to himself, and the community, in which he lives.

If I am right, in the views I have taken,

of the influence of public worship, upon the general interests of society, I suppose there can be no doubt, about the correctness of this conclusion. I hold it to be an axiom, that every man, who consents to live in society, and who avails himself of its advantages, is bound to contribute his share, to the general welfare; and to every institution, upon which, that welfare depends. If it be true, that the tone of public morals; the enjoyment of refined society — the security of property, and personal liberty, as well as the prosperity and permanency of our civil institutions, depend, in a good measure, or in any measure, upon the influence of public worship; then evidently, every man, who enjoys these privileges, and immunities, is bound in sheer justice, to do his part, for the support of that worship. Nor, has any man a better right to avail himself of the advantages, thus secured, without performing this duty, than he has to educate his family, or feed, or clothe them at the expense of his neighbors. Yet, many are content to do nothing in the premises. Glad enough indeed, are they, to reap the advantages of this institution, pro-

vided others will pay for it. But when called upon to do their part in the premises, they will either dole out a pittance, such as they would give to a common beggar; or turn away, with an ominous shrug of the shoulders saying, they cannot *afford* to do anything. Probably not, as long as others will do it for them. But of one thing I am sure; there is no man among you, who can afford to let the houses of worship, in this city, be shut up. Look at it, ye men of houses and lands, and ye owners of stocks, who chuckle over your "cent per cent." What is it, that makes your property secure? What is it, that gives you rent for your houses, and returns for your investments? Have the public morals, and the character of your city, as a place of law, and order, and social and religious advantages, nothing to do with this matter? I tell you they have much to do with it. Destroy every church, and disband every worshipping assembly in this, or any other city, and in six months its houses shall be tenantless, and the roar of its industry shall be silent; for, who would live in a city where God is not worshipped? Can you afford that? If

not, then interest unites with duty in demanding, that every man shall do his part, in upholding those institutions, upon which our prosperity depends, in a good degree. The truth is, every house of public worship, built and filled from Sabbath to Sabbath in any city, adds to the value of property alone, far more than it costs; and no man should thus enrich himself at the expense of others.

II. Public worship is a blessed privilege, which ought not to be neglected.

If we would preserve in our own souls the principles of truth and duty; if we would secure to ourselves a correct and refined moral sense; if we would be armed with strength in the day of temptation; if we would grow in knowledge and virtue, and prepare ourselves with bright hopes to cheer us, in the hour of sorrow and affliction; if we would be, what we ought to be, calm, consistent, hopeful, trustful and happy men, then should we regularly and constantly worship God, in his sanctuary.

It may be observed, here, that there are two objects to be gained in attendance upon the public

services of the church. One is instruction, and the other, a spirit of devotion. The first of these may not always be obtained, in an eminent degree. Few seem to be aware of the tax, which the preparation of two or three discourses per week, lays upon the intellectual energies of a preacher. And when it is remembered that this preparation has often to be made, in the midst of pressing duties, and harassing cares, it cannot be expected, reasonably of any man, that he shall present to his people, from an hundred to an hundred and fifty discourses in a year, all of which shall be characterized, by profound thought, or an eloquent style, or diction. In any other profession, a half dozen fine efforts of the kind, in a year, will establish the reputation of the author; but the preacher is in danger of losing his influence, if he does not pour out a perpetual flood of eloquence and wisdom. But no living man can do this; and hence I say, you may often fail of being much instructed, in the house of worship.

But you need not fail of worshipping God, and communing with him from off the mercy seat. You can bow in lowly reverence before him,

and feel your spiritual strength renewed. And this is not the least important object of going to the house of the Lord. I pray you, then, remember the public worship of God, and neglect it not. If this place does not meet your views, or satisfy your wants, go to one that does. If this minister does not edify and instruct, or lead your hearts to God and virtue, seek another, by whom you can be profited. But in God's name, wrong not your own souls, starve not your spirits, by denying them that food, which abounds in the temple of worship; for it is now true as in the days of the Psalmist, that, it is better to be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

SERMON XX.

SALVATION IN CHRIST ALONE.

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which has become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4: 11, 12.

These are the words of Peter, and they were originally addressed to the Rulers, Elders and Scribes, together with the High Priest, and his kindred, before whom, this apostle was accused as a malefactor. It appears, that Peter and John were in Jerusalem, and on entering into the Temple, they found a man sitting at the gate, asking alms, who had been lame from his birth. When he looked wishfully at Peter and John, expecting to receive something, the former said unto him, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have, give I thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones, received strength, and he

leaped up and stood, and walked, and entered with them into the Temple, walking and leaping, and praising God." The performance of this miracle excited the attention and fears of the people, and "They gathered together against Peter and John, being grieved that they taught, through Jesus, the resurrection of the dead; and they laid hands on them, and put them in hold, until the next day."

On the morrow, the rulers and their associates were gathered together; and when they had brought forth the two disciples, and set them in their midst, they demanded of them, by what name they had done this. Peter answered them, that he had done it by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and whom God had raised from the dead; and he continued in the language of our text, — "This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which has become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

It is possible, the Apostle intended the language

here employed, for special application to the circumstances, in which he was placed. It appears, that the people "were grieved because he taught, through Jesus, the resurrection of the dead" and it is not unlikely, that, when he charged them with having rejected him, as a corner-stone, he alluded particularly to the truth, that, they too, held the doctrine of the resurrection, but had built it on another foundation. In like manner, in the declaration, that there was no other name by which they could be saved, it may be, that he alluded, especially, to salvation from those severe judgments, which were impending over that people, and for deliverance from which, they trusted, not in Christ. However this may be, it is doing no violence to the spirit of the text, to take a more extended view of the principle, on which it is founded; and in discoursing from it, I propose to illustrate the position, that Jesus is the last, and the only substantial foundation of hope, for salvation to the world. Define the term salvation, in any scriptural sense; use it, in its most broad, or most limited meaning, and still it is true, that it can be found in none but Christ; for, there is no

other name given of God whereby man can be saved. The terms "*saved*," and "*salvation*," are used, in the Scriptures, with considerable latitude of meaning. Sometimes they allude to a deliverance from the temporal destruction of the Jews, which had long been foretold by the prophets, and which was then impending over that ill-fated people. Such is the fact, in the case, where Jesus spoke of the coming desolation, and the trials which awaited his disciples, at its near approach; and said, "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved." The end here named, is doubtless, the end of the Jewish state; and the salvation, is deliverance from that unparalleled desolation, which came upon that nation.

If the text uses these terms in this sense; the event, when it came, fully justified the assertion, that the stone, which they had rejected, was indeed the head of the corner; and that, there was salvation in no other. When the holy city was girt about with armies; the proud temple in flames; and the people falling in myriads, before the sword of the conqueror, and melting away, under the more dreadful mortality of fam-

ine and pestilence, *then* was it most evidently manifest, that there was salvation, *only* in Christ.

Strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless, a well-authenticated fact, that, in that scene of terrible carnage and utter ruin, which made the city of their strength a theatre of unutterable woe, and a scene of blood and tears; not a single faithful and steadfast believer in Jesus, is known to have perished. They trusted in him; heeded the signs that he foretold, and seizing the only possible opportunity, fled to a neighboring city and were safe. Through Christ, they were saved, neither was there salvation in any other.

It is remarkable also, that, during that siege, false prophets, pretending to have salvation, rose up, almost without number, and deceived many. They promised the people a miraculous interposition of God, for their deliverance; and thus, encouraged them in that hopeless, and obstinate resistance, which astonished and enraged their enemies, and ultimately tended to render their destruction more hopeless and complete.

Many were the names in which they trusted,

but not one of them could save; but the leader and his people fell in one common ruin.

In this view of salvation, it is easy to see, in the event, that the text is most sacredly true. But I dwell not on this point. It might indeed lead us to anticipate the same result in further inquiries; and teach us, that the counsels of Heaven are fixed and immutable as fate; so that, when once the voice of inspiration has spoken, not "one jot, or one tittle shall pass away, until all be fulfilled."

There is, however, a wider, and more profitable view to be taken of the subject. The salvation of the New Testament is not merely a deliverance of the people of one nation from temporal calamities; but it reaches the whole race of men, and has an influence upon the whole course of their existence, in time, and eternity. It is a salvation from ignorance, sin, and death; and the point to which I now invite your attention, is, that, in any, and all these particulars, there is no other name given, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Sin and ignorance usually go hand in hand,

and that man cannot save himself, from these, wil be evident upon a moment's reflection. I do not, of course, intend to say, there is no knowledge, or degree of outward morality, which man can obtain, and thus deliver himself from ignorance and vice of some sort. But I speak of ignorance concerning things Divine, and of that knowledge, which relates to the thraldom of the soul, and its deliverance from the reigning power and dominion of sin; and I say, man cannot save himself from the one, or obtain the other, without aid from on high. It is true, there have been, on earth, nations who have gained some knowledge, of the philosophy of the world, and raised themselves to some degree of eminence, in the arts of civilization, without the aid of the Gospel of Christ. But in these instances, there are two facts, to be borne constantly in mind.

I. Knowledge was confined to the few, and that too, at the expense of the degradation and ignorance of the many. There is no such thing, on the record of the world, as the spontaneous rising of a whole nation, from ignorance to knowledge, each man, by the unaided energies of his own soul.

A few men of gigantic intellectual power, have appeared, and have made some progress in knowledge, upon some subjects; but the masses have remained in ignorance; or if they have improved at all, they have depended upon their leaders, at every step of their advancement; for they could not save themselves.

II. It is to be noted, that the cultivation of the moral and spiritual nature, did not in these cases, keep pace with intellectual improvement. Their escape from ignorance, was not a deliverance from sin; nor was the knowledge obtained, of that kind, which tended to salvation from iniquity.

Greece was learned and wise, in some things; but all her wisdom did not advance her a step towards the knowledge of God, or deliverance from vice. Rome was great, and some of her sages were learned and eloquent men; but the masses were ignorant; and all the knowledge of her wisest men, did not save the nation from an idolatry as gross, as her ignorance was dark. Nor was the moral aspect of either Greece or Rome, far above that, presented by the most ignorant

nations of their times. Sin was as rife, in the splendid palace, reared by their knowledge of art, as among the ignorant multitudes, that followed other banners to fields of carnage and blood. All which, as I judge, goes to prove that man, in, and of himself, has not the power to rise to the knowledge of those Divine things, which are necessary to deliver his soul from sin.

We hear indeed, much, of the wonderful powers of man; and of the recuperative energies of human nature, which are able to elevate man to the highest possible dignity. And if, it be meant only, that the mind has the capacity to search out, what is "of the earth earthly," and to acquire the wisdom, that is "from beneath," I will not dispute the point. But, if it be meant, that man is so furnished with internal springs of life and light, that he needs none to teach him; but, can vault from earth to heaven, and intuitively seize upon that Divine light, which shall illuminate his spiritual darkness, and redeem him from moral pollution; I would pause, and at least, suspend judgment, until some instance of this kind of salvation is presented. I make a distinction

here, between natural goodness, and that, which is the result of culture and discipline. There are men, gifted with great intellectual powers, who will, in some things, advance in knowledge, either useful, or otherwise, as the case may be. There are also, men whose natural disposition, and temperament, are of a mild and gentle type; and these may doubtless, "do by nature some of the things done in the law;" yet, this fact proves not that, they are partakers of salvation, in the Scripture sense of the term. The difference between this natural goodness, if such it may be called; and that, which is the result of principle, of culture, and discipline, is world-wide. The former has no connection with knowledge, or moral principle; but will flow as freely from the ignorant savage, as from the wisest sage; but the latter, proceeds from a knowledge of God, of truth, and duty. It is the result of principles, planted in the soul, and is secured by much toil, and many a stern conflict, with the powers of darkness. It evinces salvation from ignorance, and from the dominion of the unhallowed passions.

And now, my position is, that man by the energies of his own nature, and in his own unaided strength, cannot grasp this salvation. He needs, and he must have, a Saviour, or he gropes in ignorance of the good and the true, of God, and of duty; and from the darkness of that ignorance, and the pit of that pollution, there is but one name which can save; and that, is the name of Christ.

Take the case of Saul of Tarsus as an illustration. He was wise in the wisdom of the world; learned in all the philosophy of his day; taught according to the most perfect manner of the fathers, and well instructed in all the traditions of the elders. But, he was exceedingly mad, and breathed out threatening and slaughter against his brethren of the human race. He entered into every house; drew forth men and women to prison, and when they were put to death, gave his voice against them; persecuting even to strange cities. All his knowledge, though of the most approved sort, did not improve his spiritual nature, or save him from being the chief of sinners.

But, all at once, this furious persecutor becomes harmless as the lamb. His savage ferocity becomes gentle as the soft breathings of love itself. He renders no railing for railing, or hatred for hatred. He toils, with a martyr's zeal, for human good. He endures persecution with patience and resignation. He submits his limbs to the chain, and his back to the scourge; and meets obloquy and reproach, without a murmur or complaint; and at last, faces death itself, in the path of duty.

Search we for the cause of this strange transformation; this wonderful deliverance from the spirit of sin and iniquity; and this astonishing development of the moral elements of the man: we shall not find it, in the fact, that he has taken other lessons from his learned master Gamaliel, or drank more deeply at the fountains of human wisdom. He might have done this, to the day of his death, and still have been a moral dwarf; a slave of sin, and the same violent persecutor, thirsting for blood; for, in all his wisdom there was no saving power. But the name of Jesus saved him. Thus he tells the story of his deliv-

erance. "For, ye have heard of my conversation in time past, in the Jew's religion, how that, beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace; to *reveal his son* in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went up to Jerusalem, to them that were apostles before me." It was the power of the revelation of Jesus, and that alone, which wrought this salvation in his case; and it may well be doubted, if there was ever another name, that could have produced this effect. Not all the wisdom of the schools; not all the philosophy of the world, and the knowledge of earth's sages, can produce an instance parallel to this.

Slowly, men may have been raised, by others, from ignorance to a respectable degree of knowledge in the sciences of the world; and it is possible, that an improvement of the morals may sometimes result; though, often, the tendency is downward, in this respect, instead of upward. But such a transformation of all the moral and

spiritual nature of man; such a deliverance, at once, from the power of sin, can only be wrought by the Gospel of Christ; and all the records of human science, furnish no instance of the kind.

No single man, by the simple energies of his own soul, or the aid of earthly wisdom, has thus burst the fetters of sin, and stood up disenthralled, and redeemed, in the full liberty of the children of God. Where then, is the hope of the race, or the prospect, that the world will be thus saved? The truth is, human wisdom is well, in its place. I have no word to utter against the philosophy of the world, *as such;* but truth compels me to say, it has no sanctifying or saving power. Left to itself, it will work evil, as well as good; and it has hitherto been quite as much exercised in devising the means of destruction, as salvation. Only when it is pointed to its end, and directed in its labors, by the spirit of Christ, does it become, even an auxiliary, in the work of human redemption. Thus, in the sense we have had in view, it is evident, that there is no other name, than that of Christ, by which we must be saved.

Sad, indeed, is the mistake of that man, who in the depths of his devotion, to the science or philosophy of the world, imagines, that it has power to redeem from iniquity, and sanctify the soul to duty and to God. Most sad of all, is the error of that preacher of the Gospel, who neglecting to rely upon the name of Jesus, and to proclaim his truth, imagines he can reform the vicious, or speak home to the moral and spiritual nature of his hearers, by amusing them with the theories of men, or the profundity of his erudition, in the mysteries of philosophy. One beam from the sun of righteousness; one thought fresh from the Master, and baptized in the name, and the spirit of Jesus, is more powerful to redeem from sin, and kindle the fires of a new spiritual life, upon the altar of the heart, than huge volumes of the vain speculations of men. The latter may please the fancy, and amuse for an hour. They may even, commend the preacher to popular favor, and give him a name among the refined and eloquent of the day; but they will starve the soul. The former alone, can touch the heart; melt, regenerate, reform, and save.

I remark, again; The salvation of the New Testament, contemplates the deliverance of man, from that fear of death, which hath torment; and ultimately, from death itself. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy death, and deliver those, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Various have been the speculations of men, in regard to the prospect, that lies before them, for the future. The mind is so constituted, that we must look forward, and inquire what awaits us, in that world of darkness, to which we are all hastening. The graves are green, or open, before us, and the inquisitive eye asks for light to shine upon the gloom of that narrow house, which is appointed for all the living.

Many are the attempts, that have been made, to relieve man from the doubts and fears, which hover over the result of the battle of death. Earth's proudest sages, and wisest heads have pondered that question long, and sought to deliver from the bondage of the destroyer. But their labors are vain. Their success is seen in

the Pagan, whose trembling hope points to a heaven of lust and sin; and whose guilty fears stand and shudder, at the thought of a deep Tartarean gulf, where spirits wander in rayless night, and seek in vain, for rest. It is seen, in the crude and miserable views, that prevail, even among, what the world calls, its enlightened men — views, which clothe the future in mourning and sorrow; make it a scene of endless cursing and blasphemy, or a cheerless abode of endless, non-existence; thus giving little to hope for, or in, and much to fear. To whom then will you go for deliverance from the power of death? "Lord, to whom shall we go, but unto thee?" Thou only, hast the words of eternal life, which can remove the gloomy veil, and bring a better world to view. In the name of Jesus, and in that alone, is laid a sure foundation of hope. Others had taught in theory, and speculated after the manner of the wisdom of the world. But Jesus did more than this. He taught in words, and demonstrated in *fact*, the resurrection of the dead. He went into the grave itself, sanctified it by his presence, and rose from its bars, thus sundering

the strongest chains of death, and proving, tangibly to the world, that the dead shall live. Reason as you may, speculate as you please; here is the only firm and immovable foundation of hope. This rejected stone is the head of the corner. No other name can boast of a victory like this; neither is there salvation, in any other. In all other systems there is doubt, and fear; in this there is none. Based upon the rock of ages, the believing soul stands secure. The heaving elements may rage, and roar around him, and the angry billows, like rolling mountains threaten to overwhelm him; but looking unto Jesus, trusting in that blessed name, and standing upon that "corner-stone, tried and precious," he feels that all is well. He knoweth his Redeemer lives, and he shall live also. And when the time of his departure is at hand, he can say in spirit, and in truth, to him on whom his soul believes,

"I'll speak the honors of thy name
With my expiring breath,
And dying, clasp thee in my arms,
The antidote of death."

SERMON XXI.

"HOPE IN GOD."

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance. PSALM 42: 5.

HOPE has, with propriety, been denominated the "deathless passion." It "springs eternal in the human breast," and is, of itself, among the richest blessings, that God has bestowed upon man. It is the companion of youth, and the solace of age; and it sheds a cheering lustre upon all, that is dark or dreary, in the pilgrimage of man, on earth. Well indeed, is it, that we are, most of us, disposed to "hope on, and hope ever." There are, however, dark shadows, and gloomy clouds, which come over us, at times, and fill the soul with apprehensions, if they do not bow it in despair. There are seasons, when evils come rushing upon us, like a resistless flood; and no way of escape seems opened. Then, we feel how weak we are, and how little human power is

likely to avail, in the stern conflict, that awaits us. So felt the Psalmist; his soul was cast down, and disquieted within him. But, in that moment of weakness and despondency, came the thought of God, whose mercy endureth forever, and whose faithfulness is throughout all generations; and that thought inspired him with new energy and life, which speaks forth in the language of the text; "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God."

There was the antidote for all of doubt and fear, all of despondency or gloom, that might come upon the soul; and this is the main idea, that I intend to illustrate in the present discourse.

It is a blessed boon, that God has given us abundant reason to trust in him, and has thus laid a foundation for human hopes, which will stand while the world standeth; and remain sure and steadfast, when time shall be no more.

In treating of hope in God, it is proper to consider it, in regard to its objects, and its foundation.

I. The objects embraced by hope in God.

So far as this world is concerned, the man who hopes in God, has greatly the advantage of him, who trusts in himself, or in anything else, except his Creator. Believing, that God is a being of perfect wisdom, infinite power, and unbounded goodness; and knowing, that his Divine government extends through all departments of nature, and providence; man can trust God, for care and protection, through all the changes and vicissitudes of life. He is assured, that although evils must come, yet, they "spring not forth from the ground," neither do they come unbidden of God; but they are parts of a wise and gracious plan: *under* them the Lord will support him, and *out* of them, he will deliver him. He looks upon the earth and its busy scenes, and feels a cheering assurance, that, in all the apparent confusion, which meets his eye, there is light, order and harmony; for God reigns, and controls the destinies of the children of men. And while nations rise and fall, he looks with "equal eye" upon the minutest event, that transpires, and numbers even the "hairs upon our heads." In earth's sorrows, as well as its joys, he beholds his Father's hand;

and accepts the one, and the other, as coming from the same paternal care and love. He can therefore, appropriate all things to his use; and while he surveys the picture of life, can derive comfort, not only from its bright and sunny hues; but also, from its darkest shades; for, they too, exhibit the great Master's hand and skill.

With this faith, a man may well hope for happiness and peace, in this life. He is prepared to enjoy, all that man can enjoy, on earth: he may hope for that perfect peace, which dwells in the tabernacle of the upright, and he may be ever confident, that he shall not be disappointed; for come what will, his Father is at the helm, and he will not leave or forsake him. It is easy to perceive, that, so far as this life is concerned, such a man, is prepared to enjoy, and may expect to gain much, that is lost upon, or deemed worse than useless, by one, who is without this hope in God.

Take an infidel, as an example, and how different the prospect before and around him! To him, this world is all, in all; and his every hope and joy, must begin and end with its dust and vanity. In the current of events, that most

nearly concern him, he sees a sweeping tide impetuously rushing on, and bearing all before it; driven by its own blind gravity alone; and lashed to foaming fury, by winds, that blow as chance directs. The world is without a governor, and has no laws, but those, which originate in blind, senseless matter, or, are devised by the wisdom of men, who seek to upbuild themselves, by the ruin of their fellows. In this scene of confusion, and in the midst of its strife and war, he must push his way onward, as best he may; now breasting the mountain wave, and now meeting the furious wind; having none to help, or deliver him, in the day of calamity. Feeble as he is, he must trust in himself alone, for there is no arm upon which he can lean, when tired and faint with the battle of life. Where his own wisdom and power fail, there is the end of his confidence and joy. Well may his soul be, often, "cast down and disquieted within him;" and well, may he sink in the gloom of despair; for his hope is in himself; and as it respects the enjoyments of this world, the child can see, that

he is immeasurably below the man whose trust is in God.

But the subject ends not here. On the contrary, the highest and most precious objects of human hopes, are in another world. We need not be bound and fettered down to earth; but on hope's triumphant wing, we may be borne upward, and onward, to a purer and a better world. The hopes of the unbeliever, meagre as they are, must be bounded by the horizon of this life; for they cannot stretch a line beyond the approaching tomb. As for himself and all he loves, they are, in his view, but the frail children of a day, destined to lie down, ere long, in the grave, and sleep in eternal silence there. In that narrow house, he sees the end of all that live; the extinction alike, of all his hopes and fears, yea, of existence itself.

But it is far otherwise with the man, who hopes in God. He trusts, that he shall live again, and his brightest star shines with unfading lustre, from the other side of the turbid waters, which flow between this world, and that "better country" towards which he is hastening. In that

blessed land, he hopes to dwell, free from the imperfections of the flesh, and all the sources of the soul's disquietude, that here, waste his faith, and nourish his despair. When, on earth, he feels himself borne down by a body of sin and death; and when he groans in pain, and sighs in affliction and sorrow; he hopes for deliverance, and with unfailing faith, trusts, that the time is drawing nigh, when his toils and conflicts shall be over; and his weary soul shall be at rest, no more to sin, no more to suffer, forever. Richer by far, are the glories to which he aspires, than all the earth can afford, more precious than time can yield.

Nor is this a selfish hope. But it is broad and catholic. Its objects are wide as creation; and it goes out, in the spirit of Heaven's love, and encircles all that live. It is not a mere hope, for a splendid inheritance for self, to be enjoyed at the expense of the poverty, and wretchedness of a kindred race. It looks, on the contrary, for the time, when the children we love; the friends that are near; the neighbors in whose welfare we are bound to feel an interest, as in our own; and

indeed, all the vast brotherhood of our race, shall be delivered from the bondage of sin and corruption, and translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And there, in that country, of which God is the light, and the life; with that family, redeemed, no member lost, no Joseph gone, no Benjamin in Egypt — but all gathered from their wanderings, and saved from their sorrows; it hopes to dwell, and enjoy the sweet communion of God, and of glorified spirits, through the ages of eternity.

This is the consummation of that hope, which rests upon God; and these are the glorious objects, it embraces. And it is thus broad and catholic, *because* it is a hope in God. It cannot be expected, of course, that any hope should be more broad, than the foundation on which it rests. And hence, all hopes founded upon human means and human agencies, must be narrow and selfish, as well as frail and perishing. Such are many of the hopes for time, and for eternity, which are indulged by men, and rested upon foundations feeble as themselves, and narrow as their own

selfish feelings. This will lead me to consider more at length,

II. The foundation of that hope, which rests upon God.

This is an important part of our subject. He who would erect a temple, that can abide the wind and storm, must look well to the foundation, upon which it is built. It matters little how beautifully, or substantially, the superstructure of a building may be reared, or how splendidly it may be garnished; if the foundation is sand, it will be a tottering Babel, destined to a speedy fall.

So it is with our hopes. Imagination may build her castles in the air; and hope may look forward and riot, in all the luxury of anticipated joy; but if the foundation is not sure and steadfast; too soon, it will vanish away, and leave us to mourn over the wreck of our fondly cherished dreams, and to sigh in the bitterness of disappointment.

But the hope to which the text points, is founded upon God, and is immutable. He is "without variableness or shadow of turning." From age to age, and from eternity to eternity,

he is the same. The heavens may wax old as a garment, and be folded up as a vesture, that is worn of man; but, the years of the eternal God, shall not fail; nor can the changes of ten thousand ages, in the least affect the being, the perfections, or the purposes of the Infinite One. He hath spoken, and it shall be done: he hath commanded and it shall stand fast forever. Manifestly, then, here is a permanent and substantial basis, upon which, hope may securely stand, and never be ashamed, or confounded. Whatever hope rests legitimately, and truthfully, upon this foundation, is firm and immovable. Men may change, in feeling, and in character; they may grow old and die; and the earth itself may pass away; but still, hope will remain unchanged and unfailing.

If a reason be asked for this hope; there is but one good reason, that can be given. "God reigns," is its calm reply; and on that, it rests, without a doubt or a fear. The storm may come, and the earthquake may heave the foundations of the world, and break up the fountains of the great deep. The stars may fall from heaven, and

the sun himself, may pale, like the flame of an expiring lamp — the baleful pestilence may stalk the earth; and nations may die in a day: still, "God reigns," and every reason remains, for hoping in him.

Perhaps, we shall best appreciate the stability, of this basis of hope by comparing it with the hopes, that men indulge.

Here is a man, who has passed through a mysterious and indescribable process of feeling, resulting in an equally mysterious change, called a "conversion of the soul;" all well enough, and useful, so far as it makes the man better, than he was before; but, as a foundation of hope, for the immortal glories of heaven, good for nothing. But on this, he depends, and year after year, he recurs in his mind, to this "conversion," as he calls it, as his only chance and hope, for life and immortality. He ponders upon the workings of his mind; he analyzes all his feelings, and examines every thought, as minutely as a physician the symptoms of a disease; if haply he may find some reason to hope; and in exact proportion as he is satisfied, or otherwise, that his conversion

was genuine, his hopes of heaven rise, or fall. Sometimes he fears, that he was deceived, or, his "experience" was a delusion; and immediately his hope wavers: its foundation is shaken; and he is well-nigh in despair. At another time, he goes back, through the vista of years, and meditates upon his feelings, in the time of that crisis, which he deems so decisive of his fate for eternity; and it wears a more favorable aspect. He is now confident it was no deception. And now, he is strong in faith, and his hope is full of immortality. And thus he lives, the alternate sport of hope and fear; now raised to the pinnacle of joy, and anon, sinking towards the depths of despair. The reason is, his hope is not in God, but in the fickle and changing feelings of his own soul; and he finds, of course, that he has built upon a frail foundation, which, ever and anon, threatens to slide from under the fabric, he has reared, with so much labor.

Another man has reared his hopes, upon his own works. The eternal weal or woe of man, is at his own disposal, and is dependent upon his own efforts. If he faithfully comes up, to all

that is required of him, it will be well; but, if he fails, in "one jot or tittle," his eternal ruin is sealed. His hope therefore, is founded entirely, upon the presumption, that he has performed; and that he will, to the day of his death, continue to perform, the works, necessary to insure his immortal bliss. Hence, he carefully keeps the account; and his hope depends upon its balance. He looks upon his past life, to-day, and sees, that in many things he has failed, and in all, he has been an unprofitable servant; and his hope trembles, and he is filled with fears, that it will utterly fail. Then, again, he thinks of himself, and as he remembers his frailty, he looks to the future, with its temptations and trials, and his heart dies within him, lest he should fail of the prize, at last. His hope is gone, and doubt and fear oppress him, and weigh him down to the earth. At another time perhaps, he contemplates the sunny side of the picture. He has just listened to a warming, and encouraging discourse. He feels strong. He is confident, that the past is forgiven, and he firmly resolves, that he will never again depart from the path of duty. Now, he is full of hope,

and animated with the prospect of an eternity of blessedness, at God's right hand. But soon, some weakness of nature, or instability of purpose, betrays him into an error of thought, word or deed; and down again, goes the temple of his hope; for its foundation is destroyed. And thus he lives; his hope, like the mercury in the thermometer, rising or falling with every change of temperature, to the amount of a single degree; and he experiences how bitter a thing it is, to set at naught that Divine word, which saith "Hope thou in God."

And thus, unhappily, it is, with many of those, who profess the name of Christ. They are building upon the basis of their own feelings, or works, and hence the instability of their hopes. True, they repudiate the idea of depending upon themselves; and make many professions of humility, and of a sense of entire dependence upon God. But notwithstanding all this, there are facts which go to show, that the profession is not well founded in truth, however sincerely it may be made.

It is an unquestionable fact, that the criterion of judgment to which an appeal is made, to

decide whether there is hope for salvation, in any, and every given case, is the feelings or the works of man, rather than the government, or the immutable purpose of God. Take an illustration. A friend has departed this life; and the question is, whether those who mourn may hope, that it is well with him. If they apply to their spiritual teachers, for a solution of the question; the first inquiry will be, not what God has *said*, but what the man had *done*, or experienced. Was he a professor of religion? Had his soul been converted? Did he lead a life of prayer? And was he resigned, in his last moments? If these questions can all be answered in the affirmative, the decision will be, that there is good reason for hope, in his case. But if they are answered in the negative, a gloom of hopeless darkness must settle down upon his future destiny. Such are the foundations, on which men build their hopes; and it is no wonder, that they are faint and feeble.

I would not utter a word against the utility of a well-regulated religious experience, or the importance of a life conformed to the spirit of

Christ. As bearing upon man's happiness, here on earth; and as blessed in all their influences, they are important, and should be cherished devoutly. But as foundations of hope, for the life immortal, they are the veriest rubbish imaginable; not a whit above the "filthy rags" upon which the Scribes and Pharisees of old, built their faith and hope. For that glorious boon, there is no hope worth possessing, which rests not, solely upon God, and his abundant grace.

Allow me to offer, a few words more upon this point, for it is one of vast importance, especially to the bereaved and afflicted. It is truly wonderful, how slight and trivial are the circumstances, on which, those who are called to part with friends, rely, for hope, in the case of those, who have departed. A single instance will illustrate a multitude of cases, which are constantly occurring.

Here is a mother, who has lost her child. Like her, of Nain, "it was her only son, and she is a widow." He was cut down, in the morning of life, and in the midst of his promise of usefulness to the world. The widow's hope has fallen;

her home is desolate; her idol has been taken away; and the question of his destiny, in the future, comes with thrilling power to a mother's heart. But, alas! poor stricken sufferer; she has not been taught to hope in God alone! She looks not up, with trustful hope and love, saying, "Thy grace O God, is sufficient for all emergencies; and with thee will I trust my son; and solace this bleeding heart, with the full hope, that all is well with him." Nay, but she will immediately go to the history of the life of the youth, and endeavor there, to find the material for building a foundation of hope. And thus, will she soliloquize, upon the mighty question, which, in her view, involves the eternal weal, or woe, of her son. "True, he had been like others, of his age, thoughtless, and perhaps giddy; and had not, as we know, been converted, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. But, after all, he was a dear and affectionate child; and during his last sickness, I heard him utter a prayer to God for mercy; and I hope he is in heaven." Now, what I wish to note is, that this hope, if indeed, such it can be called, is not founded upon God,

but upon a slight and transient event, in the life of a child. Take away that little circumstance, and hope would die. Poor heart-smitten mourner; God pity thee! It is a blessed thing, that there is left thee, even that much, amid the wreck of human hopes, caused by the cheerless superstitions of the world. I would not pluck it from thee, for it is all, that saves thee from the utter desolation of hopeless despair. But O! how unlike the confiding spirit of the Psalmist, who, when sinking in the deep waters of affliction, could raise his trustful eyes to Heaven, and chide the weakness, that faltered, for a moment, saying, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance." In God, and in him alone, is there found a stable and steadfast foundation of hope. To him then, let us go, and "cast all our care upon him," feeling that he careth for us; and knowing, that he will never leave, or forsake us. All else, is fleeting and changing as the wind. *Here* is the foundation, that cannot be moved, and those who build upon it, shall not

be disappointed. It is firm enough, and broad enough, to sustain a hope, which shall include the world. On that immovable rock, let us build, and then, in every season of sorrow or danger, we can say with the poet,

"My lifted eye without a tear,
The gathering storm shall see.
My steadfast heart shall know no fear
That heart is stayed on thee."

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